

ROBERT KIRKMAN • RYAN OTTLEY • CORY WALKER

# INVINCIBLE™

## COMPENDIUM TWO



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# INVINCIBLE

## COMPENDIUM TWO

**ROBERT KIRKMAN**

writer

**RYAN OTTLEY**

penciler (issues 48-65,  
68-84, 87-96, Invincible  
Returns I main story)  
inker (issues 48-51, 55,  
73, 75, 83, 87, 88)  
covers (48-50, 52-65, 68-  
84, 87-96)

**CORY WALKER**

penciler/inker (issues  
66-67, 85-86, 92-96,  
Invincible Returns  
backup story I)  
covers (issues 66, 67, 85,  
86, 92-96)

**CLIFF RATHBURN**

inker (issues 52-54,  
56-65, 68-84, 87, 89-96,  
Invincible Returns I  
main story)

**RUS WOOTON**  
letterer

**BILL CRABTREE**  
colorist (issues 48-50)

**FCO PLASCENCIA**

colorist (issues 51-65,  
68-78, 85-86, Invincible  
Returns I main story)

**DAVE MCCRAIG**  
colorist (issues 66-67)

**NIKOS KOUTSIS**  
colorist (issues 79-81)

**JOHN RAUCH**  
colorist  
(issues 82-84, 87-96)

**SHEILA SALDANA**

color assistant  
(issues 75-78)

**IVAN PLASCENCIA**  
color assistant  
(issue 75)

**MIKE TORIS**  
color assistant  
(issue 79-81)

**RYAN OTTLEY & JOHN RAUCH**  
cover

### **ASTOUNDING WOLF-MAN #11**

**JASON HOWARD**  
penciler, colorist, cover

**CLIFF RATHBURN**  
inker  
**RUS WOOTON**  
letterer

### **COVERS**

**JIM LEE**  
issue 51

**DAVID FINCH**  
Invincible Returns I

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Since first breaking in as the writer of his self-published Battle Pope, **ROBERT KIRKMAN** has been a strident proponent of creator-owned comics. Making his home at Image Comics early on, Kirkman is the creator and co-creator of some of the company's most beloved titles, including *Invincible*, *The Walking Dead* and *Super Dinosaur*. Based on the strength of his creator-owned properties, the writer was offered work at Marvel Comics, where he worked on popular characters such as the X-Men and *Fantastic Four*, while launching the fan-favorite *The Irredeemable Ant-Man* and *Destroyer MAX*. More recently, Kirkman has committed himself fully to creator-owned work, continuing his three ongoing titles under his Skybound imprint at Image while also acting as executive producer on *The Walking Dead* television show.

Starting with issue #8, **RYAN OTTLEY** has not only made *Invincible* his home, but he has made it his own as well. For years, the artist has joined forces with Robert Kirkman in detailing the ongoing adventures of young Mark Grayson. Not only is Ottley a talented storyteller, but he also boasts an unparalleled work ethic. His speed made it possible for him to draw a guest spot on DC Comics' *Superman/Batman* as well as launch the new ongoing series *Haunt*, while remaining *Invincible*'s regular artist for over ninety issues and counting.

The co-creator of *Invincible*, **CORY WALKER** was also the series' original artist, drawing issues #1-7 and setting the tone for the title. Since then, the talented artist has performed art duties on numerous titles at both Marvel and DC Comics, including issues of *Marvel Team-Up*, *The Irredeemable Ant-Man*, *Punisher War Journal*, and *Shadowpact* in addition to acting as sole artist on the critically acclaimed *Destroyer MAX*, alongside writer and *Invincible* co-creator Robert Kirkman. Walker has never forgotten his creation however, and has contributed frequent guest spots on *Invincible* issues, covers and back-ups.

The Mexico-based artist **FCO PLASCENCIA** began his professional coloring career on *Gemini* from Image Comics, before his extended runs on *Invincible*, *Astounding Wolf-Man* and *Haunt*. He currently colors DC Comic's bestselling *Batman*.

**JOHN RAUCH** is an American comic book colorist whose credits include *Invincible*, *The Darkness*, *Teen Titans: Year One*, *Patsy Walker: Hellcat*, and a bunch of other stuff not worth bragging about. He enjoys speaking about himself in the third person and pretending he is more talented and relevant than he really is in order to help fight off bouts of depression.

Anyone who looks at the credits of their favorite comic books is likely familiar with the name **RUS WOOTON**. With his work on *Invincible*, *The Walking Dead*, *Super Dinosaur*, *The Manhattan Projects*, *Sex and more*, a case could easily be made for Wooton being the go-to letterer for creator-owned comics. But Wooton's work can also be found in abundance at Marvel Comics, where as a member of Chris Eliopoulos' Virtual Caligraphy group he has lettered countless series including *Fantastic Four*, *newuniversal*, *Uncanny X-Men* and more.

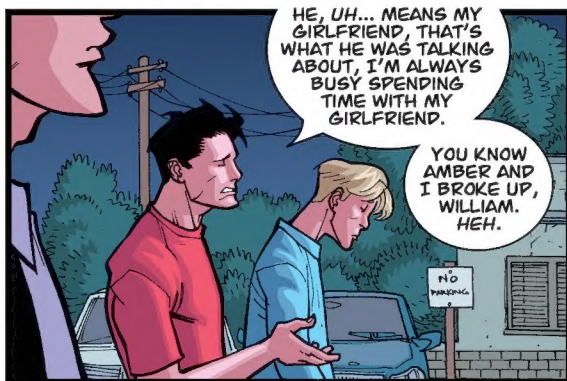
**SEAN MACKIEWICZ** is the Editorial Director of Skybound Entertainment. Choosing his favorite title to work on is like picking your favorite child...if all your children were covered in blood.



# CHAPTER 48









HEY--WAIT  
A MINUTE.  
DID WE SAY  
SOMETHING?

WHAT'S  
GOING  
ON?

I'M  
JUST--  
OH,  
GOD...



I KNOW  
YOU GUYS DON'T  
KNOW EVERYTHING  
THAT HAPPENED TO  
ME WHEN THAT  
PSYCHO ABDUCTED  
ME--YOU HAD TO  
SEE SOME OF IT  
ON THE NEWS  
BUT--

THE THINGS  
HE DID TO ME, WHAT  
HE TURNED ME INTO--  
I ONLY REMEMBER  
SOME OF IT, BUT HE  
CHANGED ME... I--  
I'M BARELY EVEN  
HUMAN  
ANYMORE.

I KNOW YOU  
GUYS CAN'T TELL,  
IT'S ON THE INSIDE--  
YOU CAN'T SEE IT,  
BUT I CAN FEEL IT...  
I KNOW IT'S--I  
CAN'T SLEEP...  
I HAVE  
NIGHTMARES.

I'M SORRY,  
GUYS--I JUST--  
I WASN'T  
READY FOR  
THIS.

I'M  
SORRY.

SO...

THAT WAS  
OUR RIDE...  
YOU THINK  
MAYBE...?

HUH?

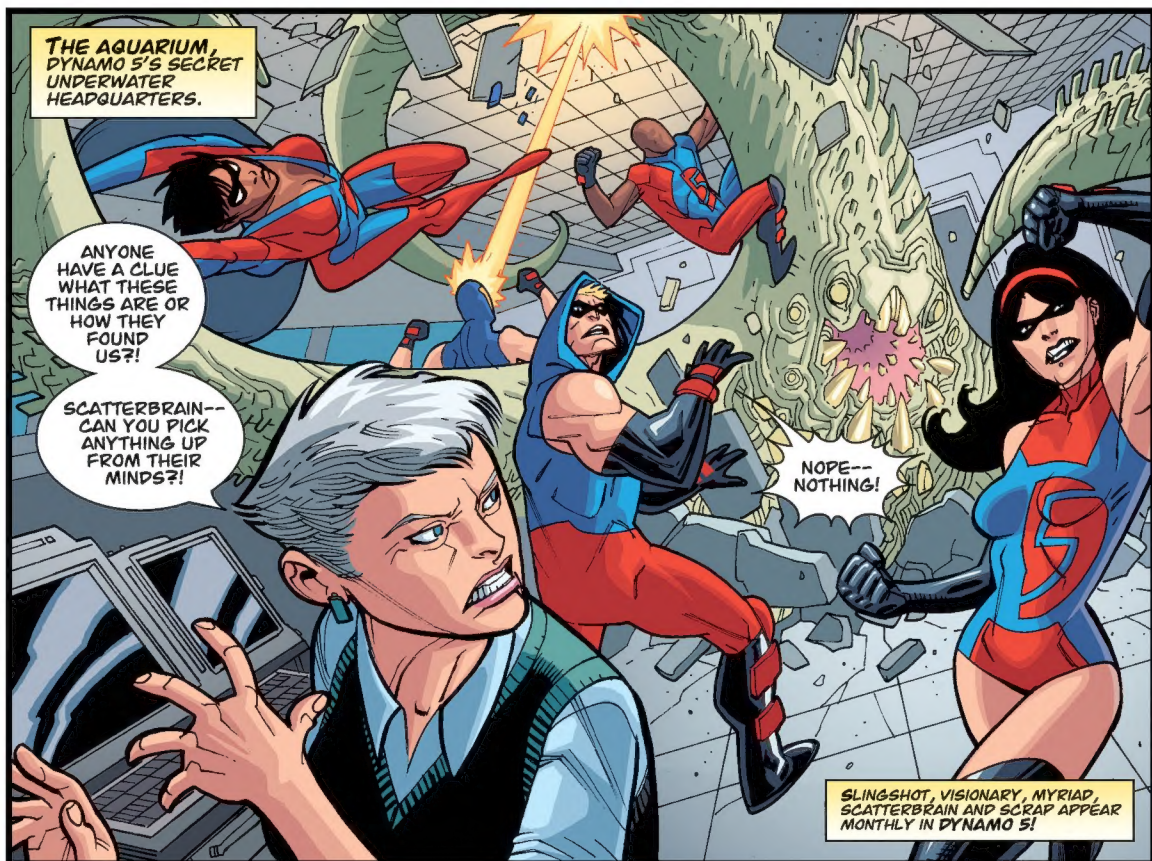
NO. NO  
WAY.  
YOU CAN  
WALK.

I'VE GOT  
SOMETHING  
I NEED TO DO,  
ANYWAY...  
SOMETHING  
I'VE BEEN  
PUTTING OFF.

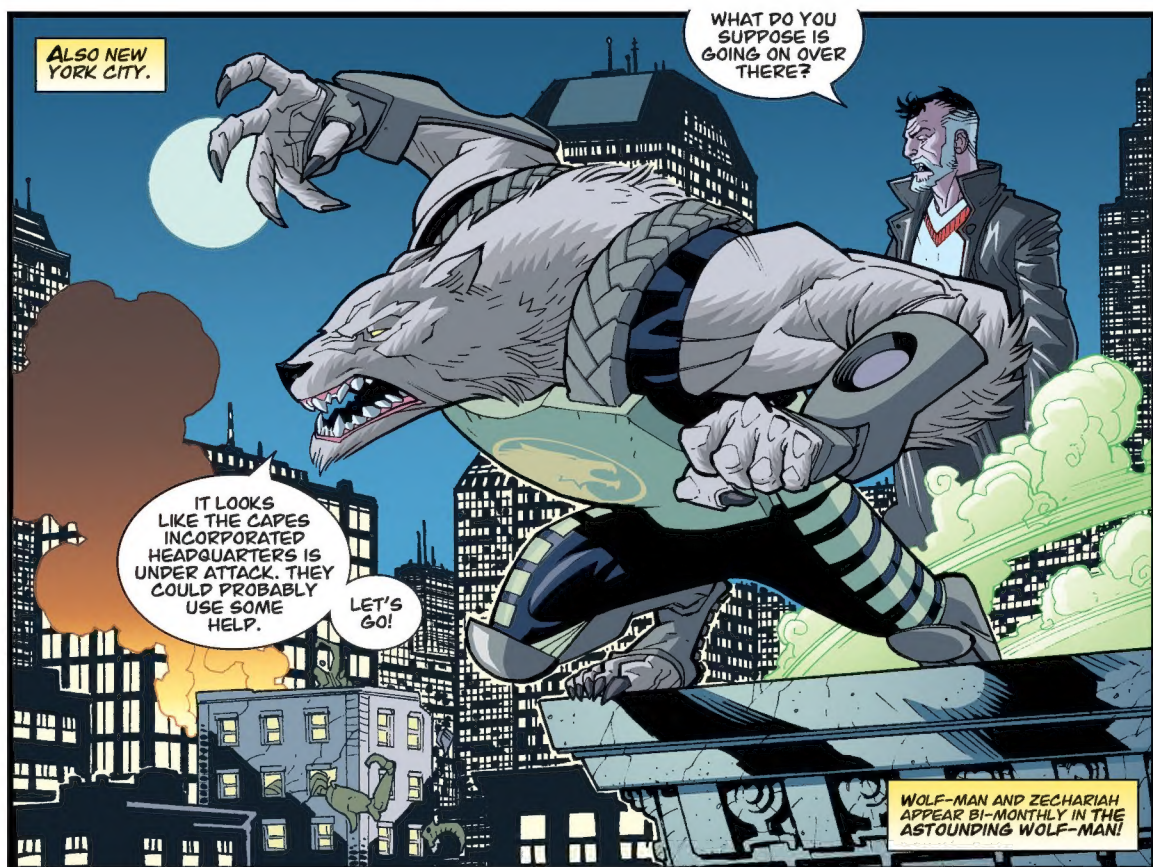




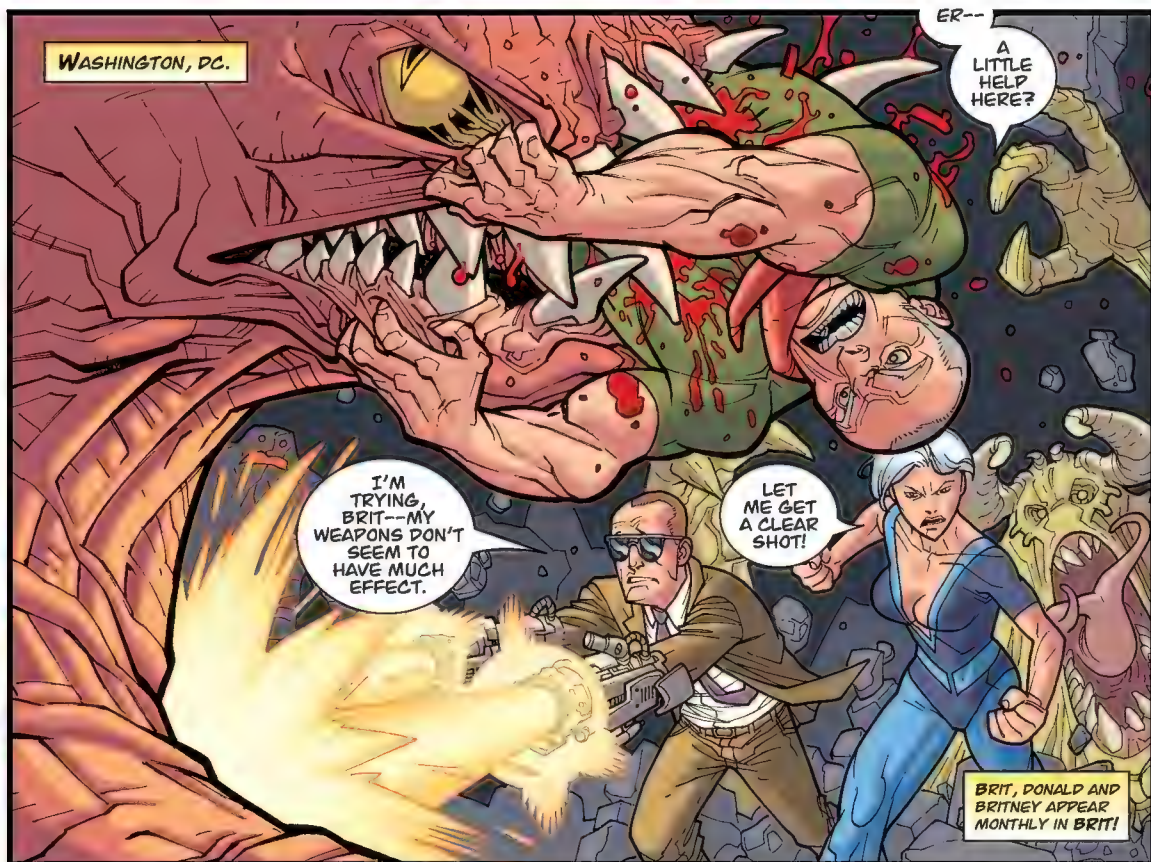




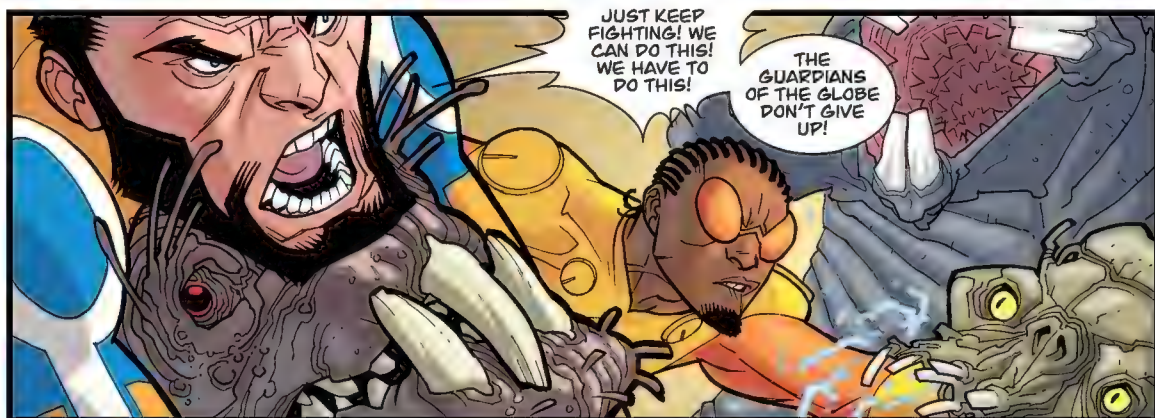
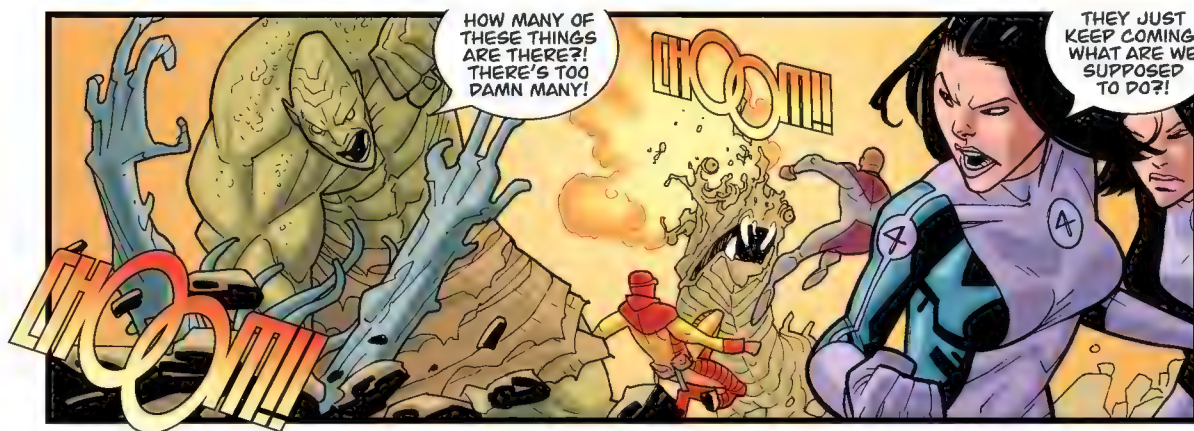
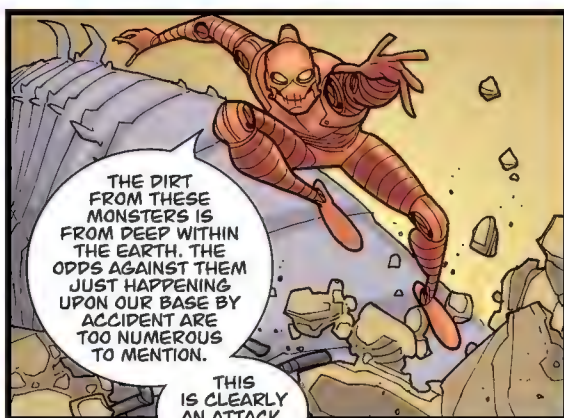




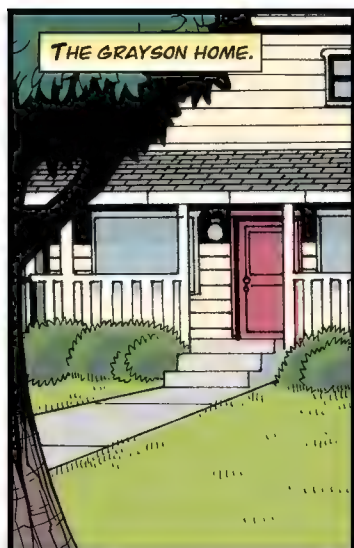


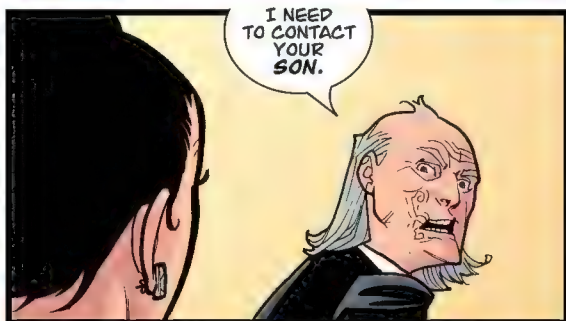
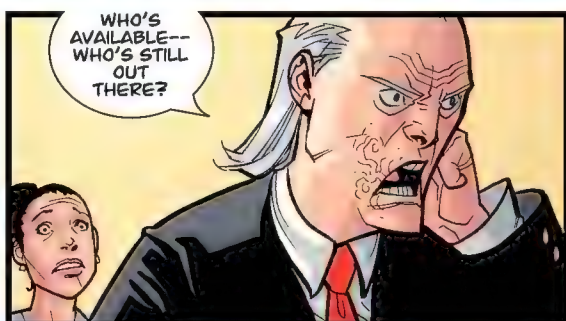
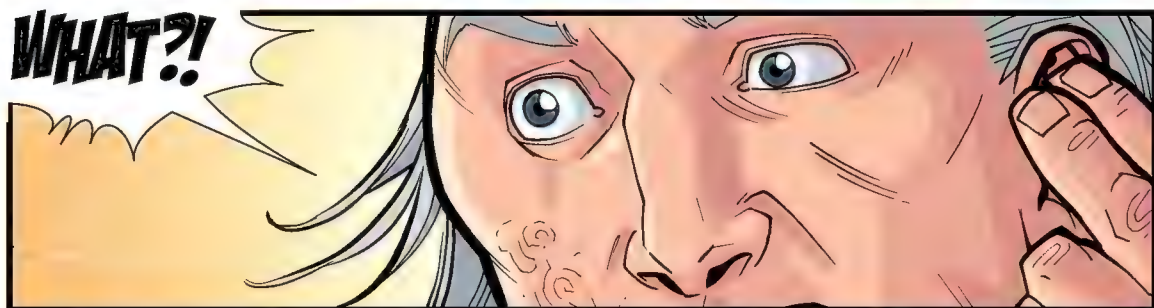












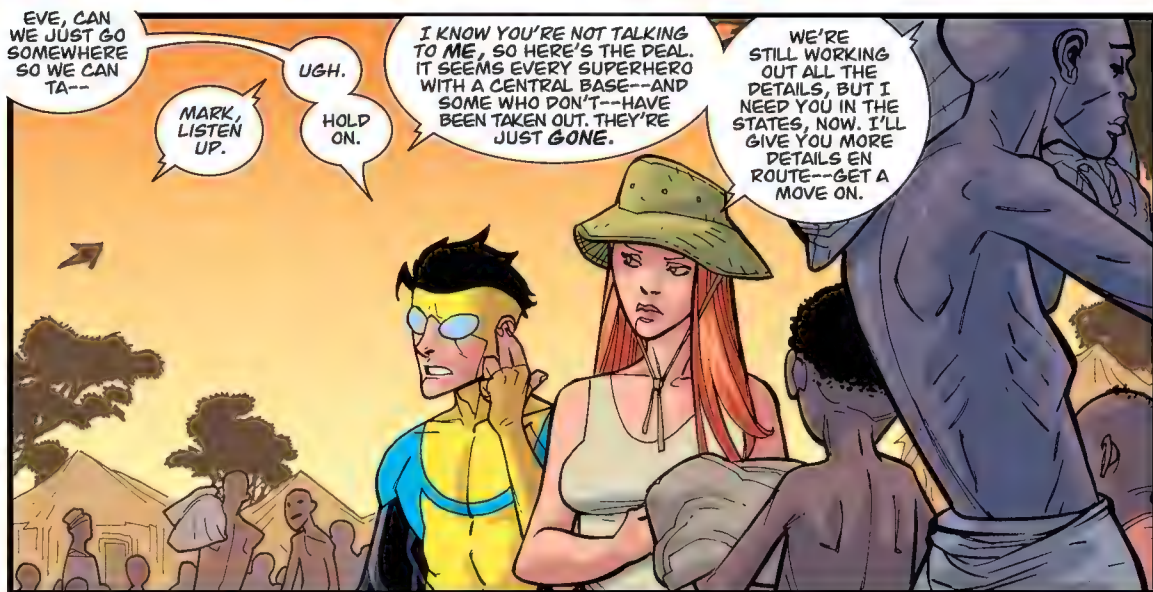


AFRICA.

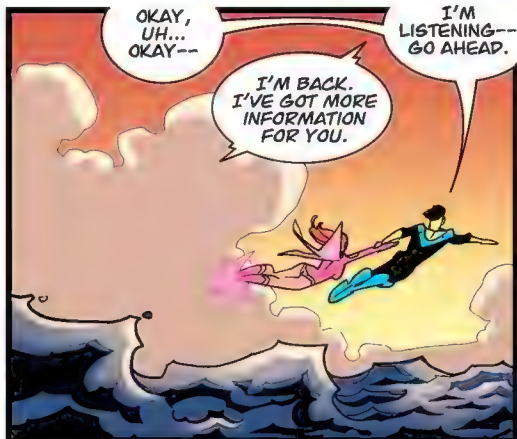
DO YOU  
KNOW HOW  
HARD IT WAS  
FOR ME TO  
FIND YOU?

NOT HARD  
ENOUGH.

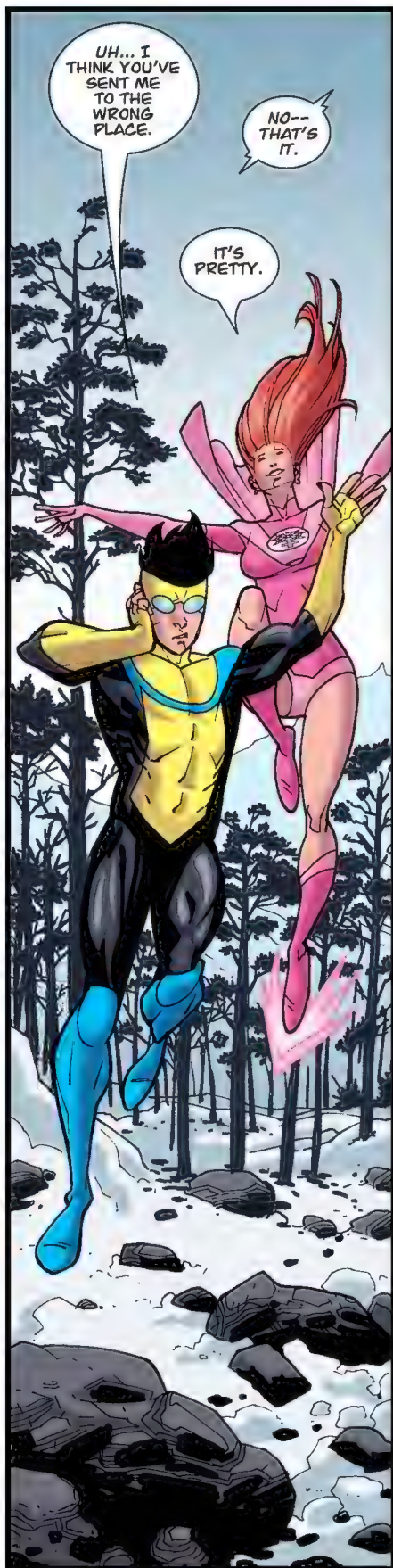












UH... I  
THINK YOU'VE  
SENT ME  
TO THE  
WRONG  
PLACE.

NO--  
THAT'S  
IT.

IT'S  
PRETTY.



I'M TELLING YOU--  
UNLESS CHIPMUNKS  
ABDUCTED THE  
REST OF THE WORLD'S  
SUPERHEROES--  
WE'RE AT THE  
WRONG PLACE.



NO, YOU'RE THERE.  
SORRY, THE TRACKERS  
THE CAPES EMPLOYEES  
ARE GIVEN ARE A BIT  
OUT-DATED. ROBOT JUST  
CONTACTED ME, THEY  
ONLY GOT HIS ROBOT  
BODY--HE'S SAFE.  
HE'S GOT MORE  
PRECISE TRACKING  
ABILITIES.

THEY'RE  
THREE MILES  
DOWN.



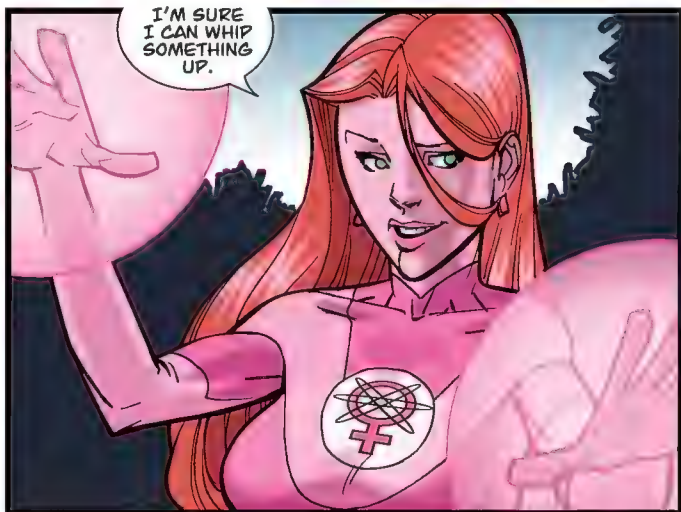
OH,  
GREAT.

THEY'RE  
THREE MILES  
UNDER-  
GROUND.

OH...  
FUN.



GOT ANY  
SUGGESTIONS  
FOR DIGGING?



I'M SURE  
I CAN WHIP  
SOMETHING  
UP.





YOU'RE NOT LAUGHING NOW, ARE YOU?!

ARE YOU?!

IT IS YOU WHO LOOK LIKE FOOLS, THIS TIME! IT IS YOU WHO IS LAUGHED AT!

HA! HA! HA! HA!

I'M JUST--I'M BLOWN AWAY BY HOW EASY ALL THIS WAS. ONCE I REALIZED I COULD STILL SPEAK TO THE LEGIONS OF UNDEREARTH--MY PEOPLE... IT ALL CAME TOGETHER.

I KNEW THAT SOME OF YOU WOULD BE CAUGHT OFF GUARD-- BUT REALLY, THIS STEP OF THE PLAN WAS ONLY MEANT TO THIN YOU OUT!

FOR CREATURES THAT TRAVEL THE CORE OF THE EARTH, COMMUNICATING WITH LITTLE MORE THAN VIBRATION--FINDING YOUR SECRET STRONGHOLDS AND SANCTUARIES WAS CHILD'S PLAY!

I DIDN'T EXPECT TO GET ALL OF YOU!!

ARROGANT JERK!

WE'LL SEE HOW CONFIDENT YOU ARE AFTER--

FLOOM!

IRK!

ACTUALLY-- I MIGHT HAVE A BETTER IDEA TO-- UNGH!

I WOULDN'T HOLD OUT MUCH HOPE FOR ESCAPE IF I WERE YOU. THE SUBSTANCE YOU ARE IN IS VERY STRONG--VERY, VERY STRONG.

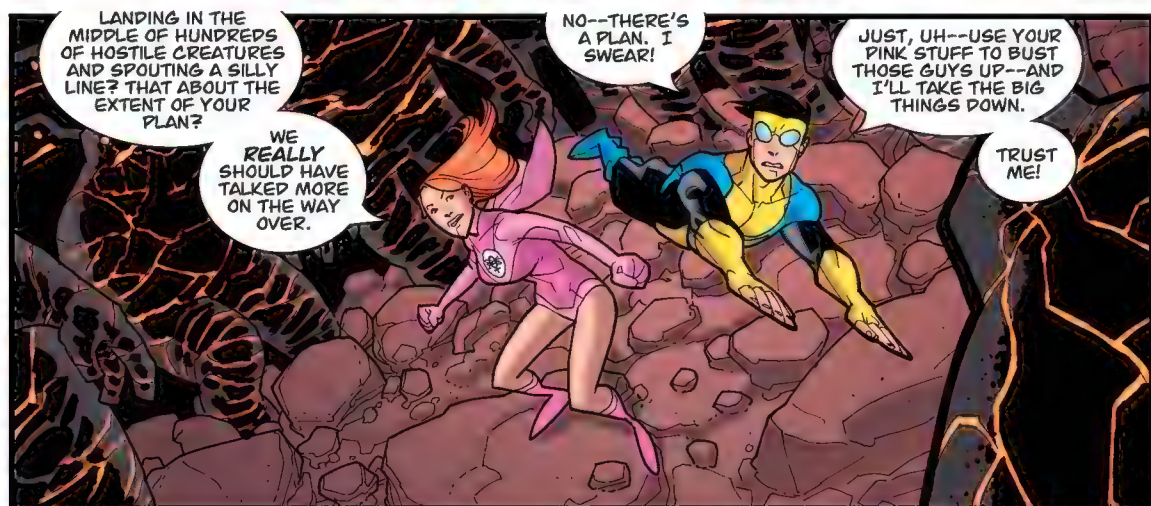
TRUE, SOME OF YOU COULD PROBABLY BURST THROUGH--BUT NOT WITHOUT CRUSHING THE PEOPLE ALSO CONTAINED WITHIN YOUR INDIVIDUAL GLOBES.

SO TAKE THAT INTO CONSIDERATION.

SO ESCAPE-- NEXT TO IMPOSSIBLE. AND WE'RE MANY MILES BELOW EARTH'S SURFACE--SO THE CHANCES OF A RESCUE ARE--

LET ME JUST SAY I HAVE YOU ALL RIGHT WHERE I WANT YOU.







INVINCIBLE!



IF YOU GO INTO MIST FORM--I THINK I CAN GET US OUT OF HERE!



I'M GOING TO WEAR YOUR SKIN AS A TROPHY!



YOU KNOW, SEISMIC... I SEEM TO RECALL YOU PACKING A BIT MORE PUNCH THAN THAT--MAYBE IT'S JUST ME.



I WASN'T TRYING TO HURT YOU--I WAS JUST MAKING A CALL.











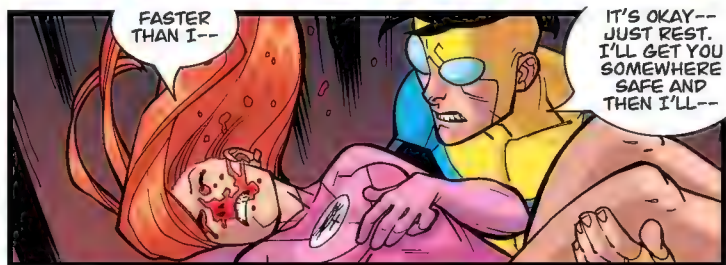
OKAY--DON'T LET THESE THINGS INTIMIDATE US! I CAN DO SOME DAMAGE REAL QUICK.

THE BIGGER THEY ARE THE HARDER THEY--



GAK!

I GOT YOU!



FASTER THAN I--

IT'S OKAY--JUST REST. I'LL GET YOU SOMEWHERE SAFE AND THEN I'LL--



EVE!

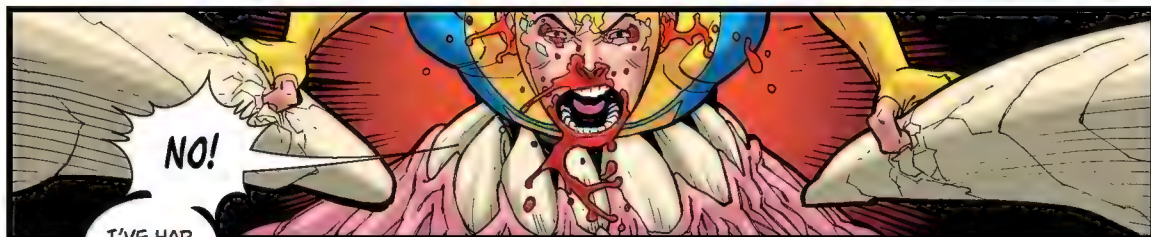
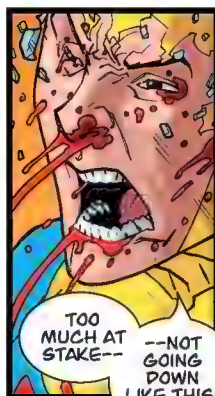
I'VE GOT HER, HERO--YOU JUST DO YOUR THING.

















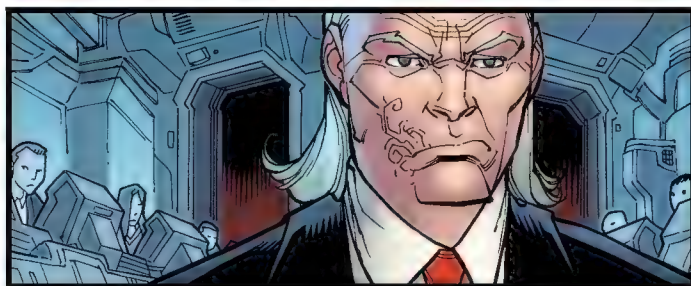
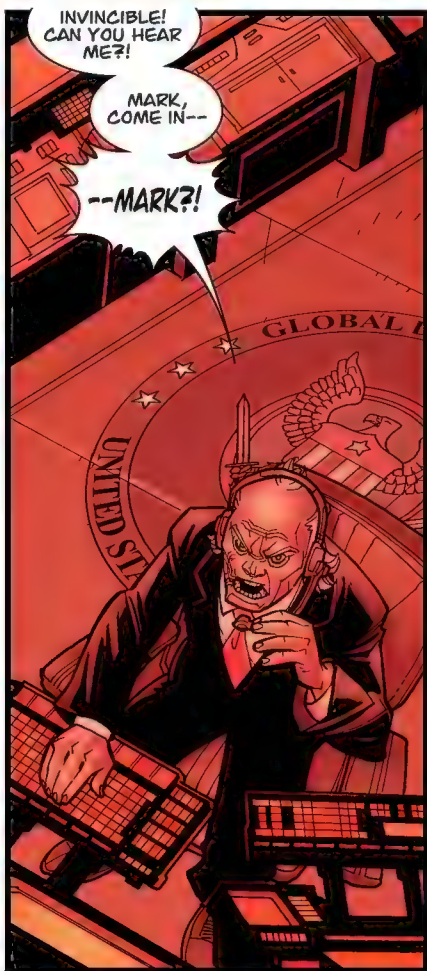
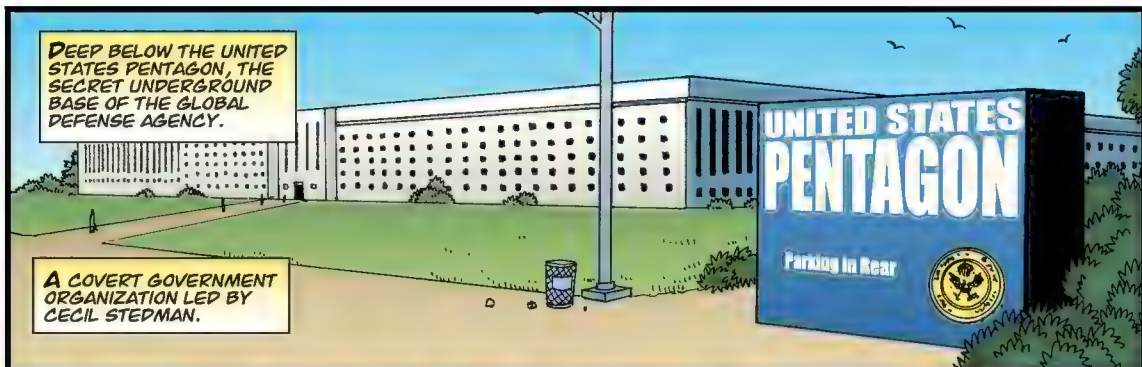




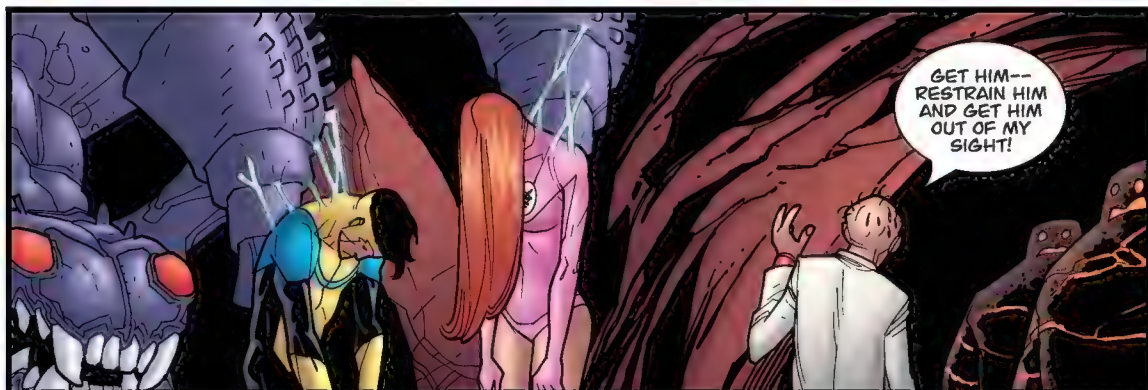
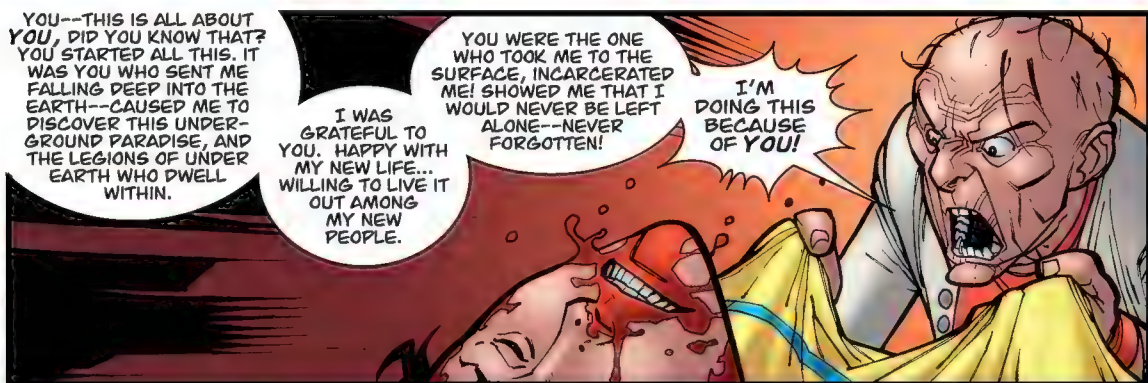
# CHAPTER 49



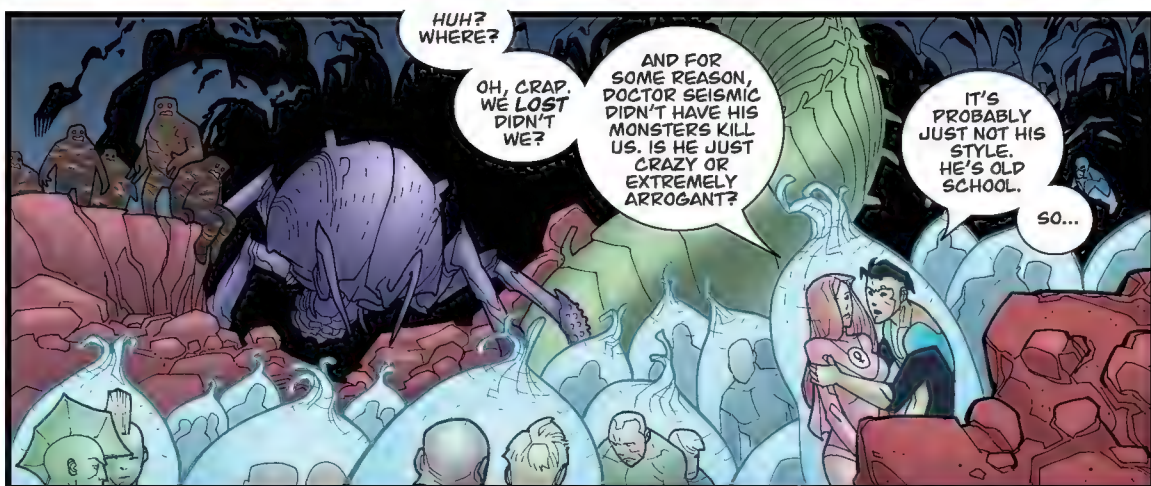
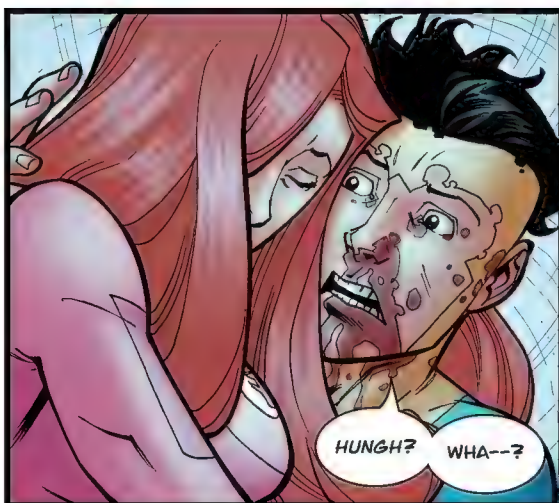








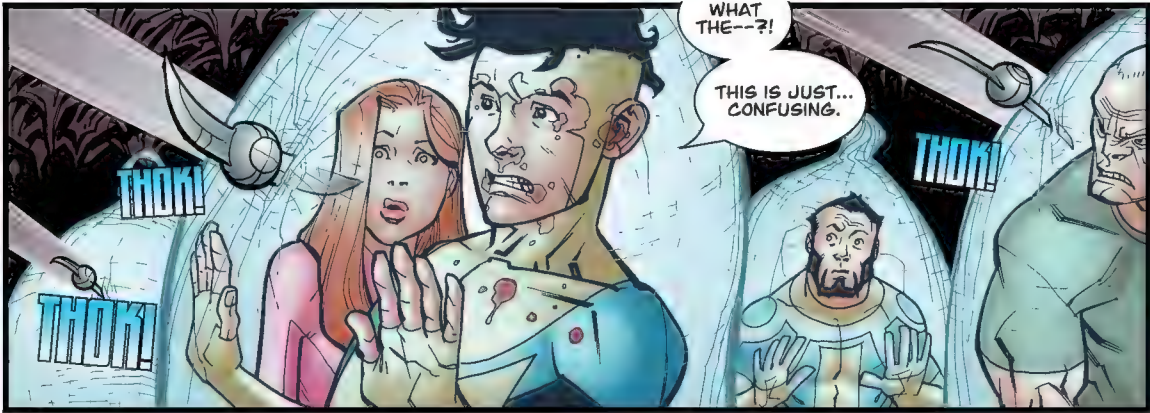




















WROOOOM!!!





THERE'S STILL SOME FIGHT LEFT IN THIS OLD DOG! BUT I'M NO FOOL--I CAN SEE THE WRITING ON THE WALL.

MAYBE THIS IS IT-- MAYBE IT'S ALL BUT OVER. BY WORKING TOGETHER, YOU MAY BE ABLE TO DEFEAT MY LEGIONS OF UNDER-EARTH!

BUT IF THIS IS IT, IF I'M GOING DOWN--I'M TAKING EVERY ONE OF YOU WITH ME!

I DON'T THINK SO.

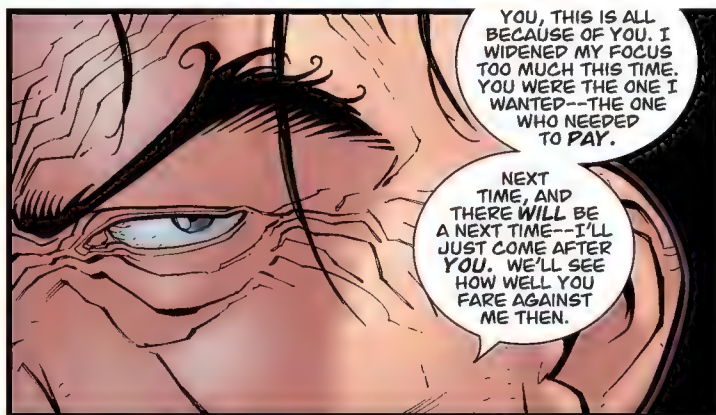


YOU!

YOU THINK YOU'RE FAST ENOUGH TO STOP ME BEFORE I BRING THIS CAVE DOWN ON EVERYONE?



I AM-- AND YOU KNOW I AM.



YOU, THIS IS ALL BECAUSE OF YOU. I WIDENED MY FOCUS TOO MUCH THIS TIME. YOU WERE THE ONE I WANTED--THE ONE WHO NEEDED TO PAY.

NEXT TIME, AND THERE WILL BE A NEXT TIME--I'LL JUST COME AFTER YOU. WE'LL SEE HOW WELL YOU FARE AGAINST ME THEN.

OLD MAN, ARE YOU GOING TO MAKE ME PUNCH YOU?



I'M GOING TO MAKE YOU TRY.

















STAND DOWN,  
INVINCIBLE!

RIGHT  
NOW!



HE--HE  
MURDERED PEOPLE.  
HE WAS A COLD-  
BLOODED KILLER.  
WHY DOESN'T  
ANYONE KNOW  
ABOUT THIS?



I HAVE KNOWN  
DARKWING FOR  
SOME TIME, BACK  
IN HIS DAYS AS  
NIGHT BOY WHEN  
HE WORKED WITH  
THE ORIGINAL  
DARKWING.

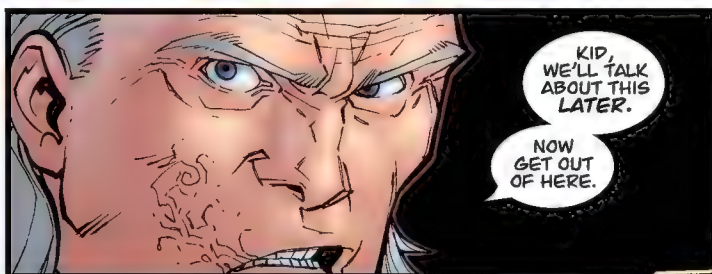
ARROGANT,  
YES--BUT  
NEVER A  
KILLER.



I WAS THERE--I  
SAW HIM. WASN'T  
THIS ALL OVER THE  
NEWS? I THOUGHT  
EVERYONE KNEW  
ABOUT THIS.

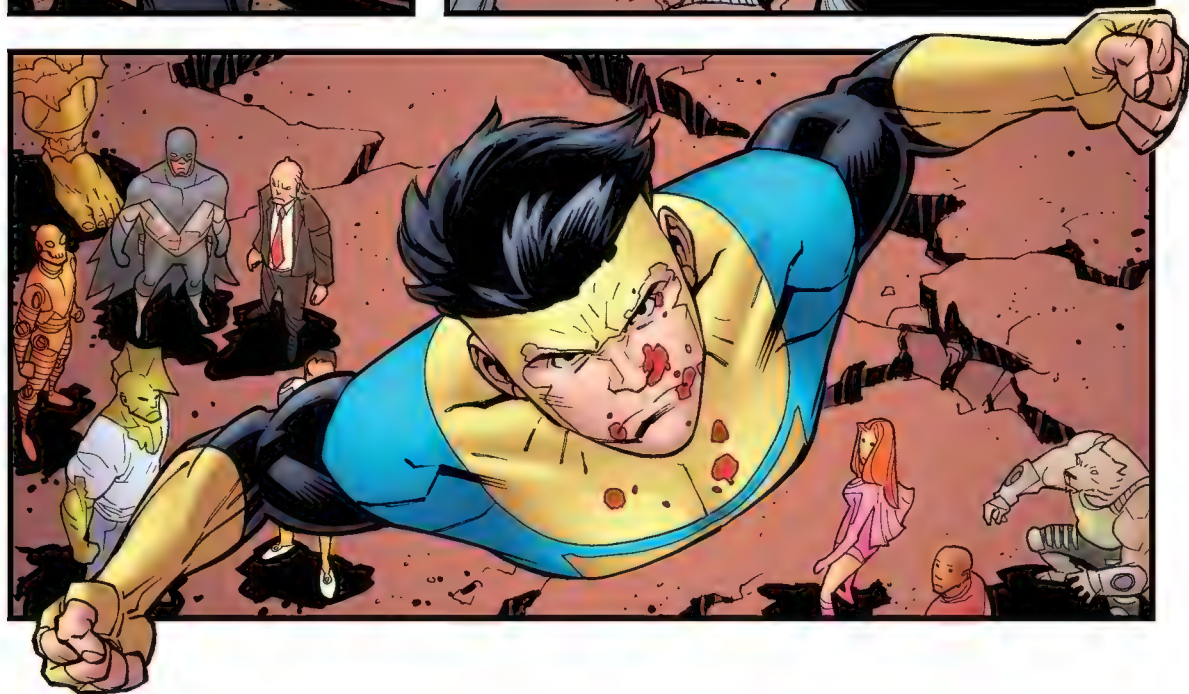
WE'LL  
TALK ABOUT  
THIS  
LATER.

BUT--

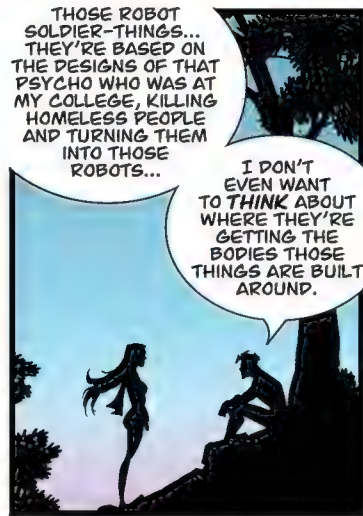
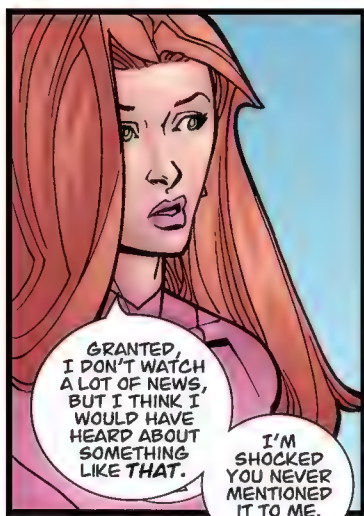


KID,  
WE'LL TALK  
ABOUT THIS  
LATER.

NOW  
GET OUT  
OF HERE.









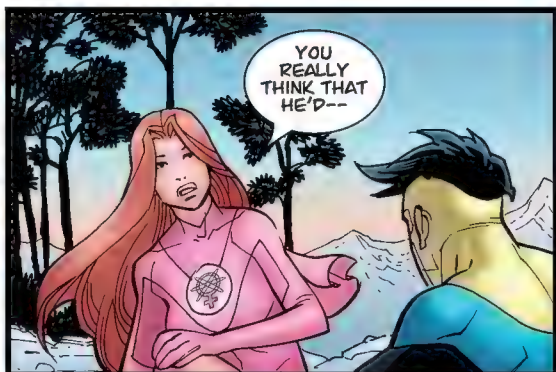
IF THE NEWS HAD BROADCAST ANYTHING ABOUT PARKWING, I WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN THE ONLY ONE TO ATTACK ONCE THOSE MONSTERS WERE DEFEATED.

THERE WAS A COVER UP--THE NEWS NEVER WENT PUBLIC.

CECIL STEPMAN HEADS UP THE GLOBAL DEFENSE AGENCY--THEY CAN DO ANYTHING IN THE NAME OF "GLOBAL DEFENSE."

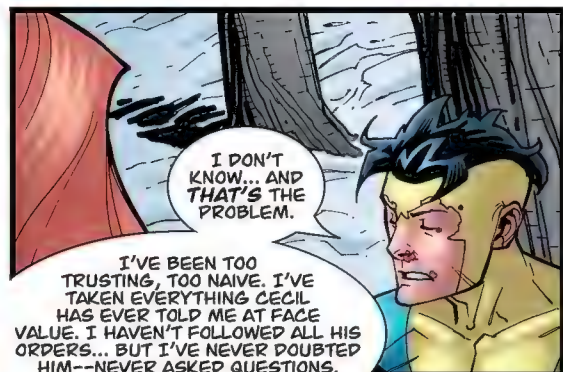


YOU REALLY THINK THAT HE'D--



I DON'T KNOW... AND THAT'S THE PROBLEM.

I'VE BEEN TOO TRUSTING, TOO NAIVE. I'VE TAKEN EVERYTHING CECIL HAS EVER TOLD ME AT FACE VALUE. I HAVEN'T FOLLOWED ALL HIS ORDERS... BUT I'VE NEVER DOUBTED HIM--NEVER ASKED QUESTIONS.



CAN YOU GET YOURSELF BACK HOME?

YEAH, SURE.

AND LATER-- AFTER I'M DONE, I WANT TO COME VISIT--CLEAR THINGS UP BETWEEN US. I DON'T LIKE THIS... TENSION.

I'D UH, I'D LIKE THAT, MARK. WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO NOW?

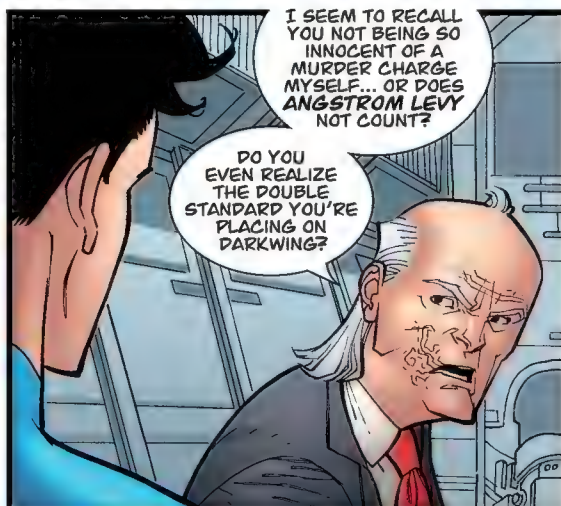
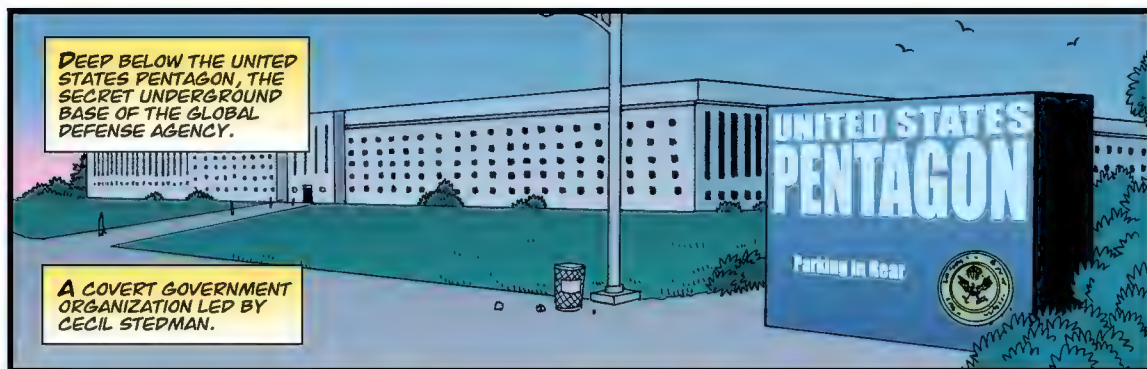


ASK SOME OF THOSE QUESTIONS...

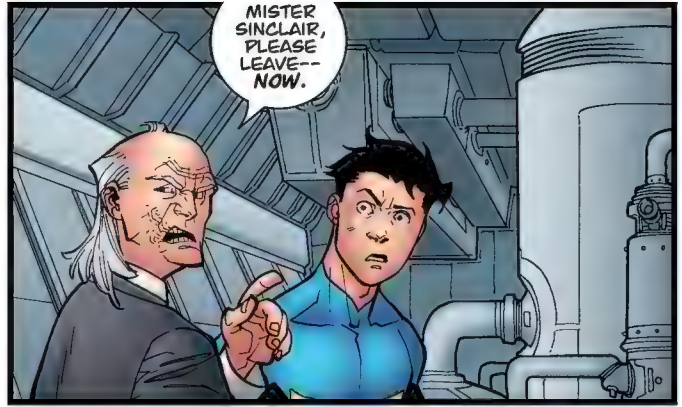
...WHETHER I WANT TO KNOW THE ANSWERS OR NOT.



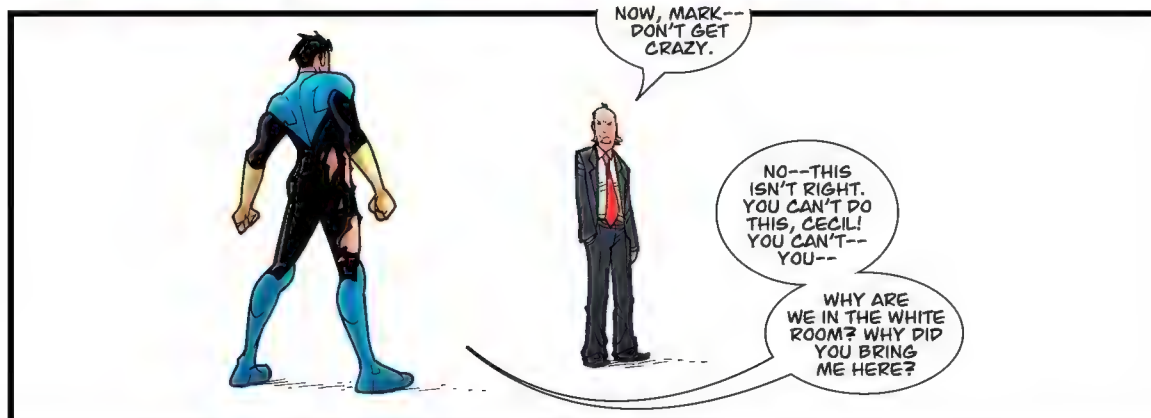
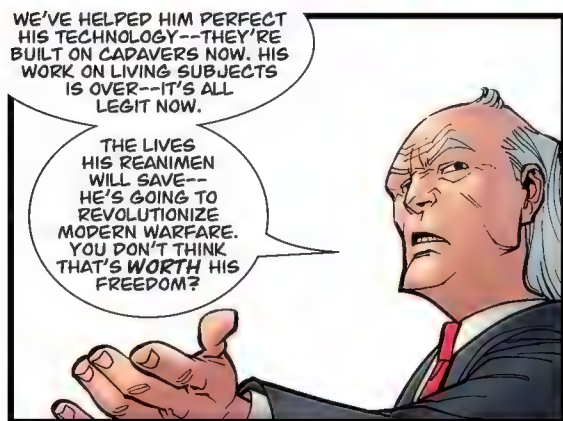














FOR THE  
ELEMENT OF  
SURPRISE.





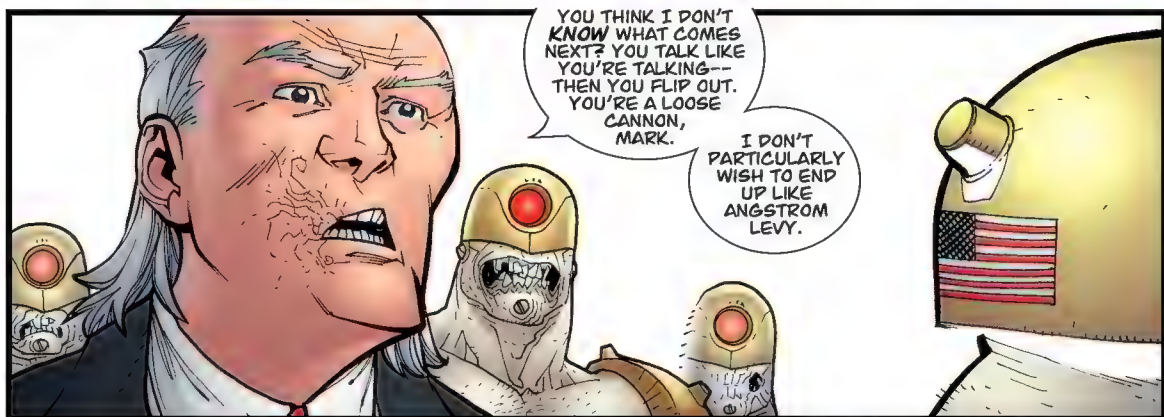
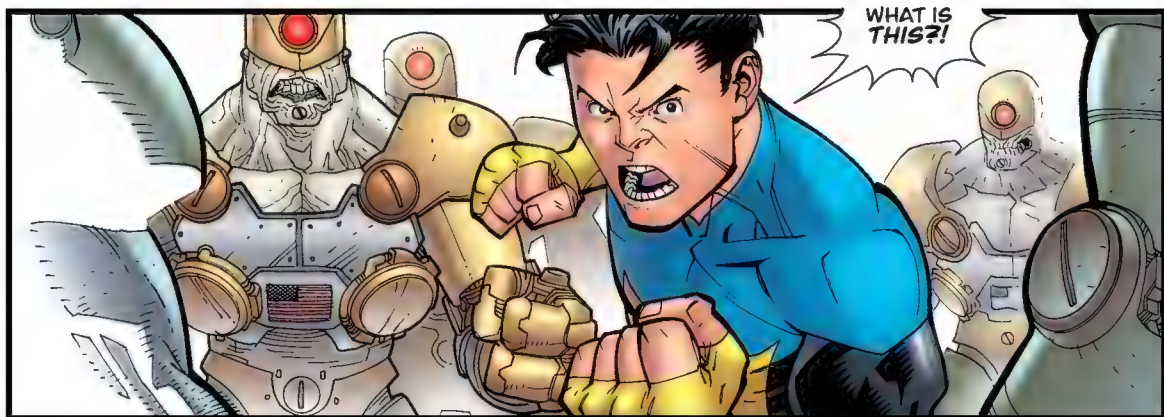




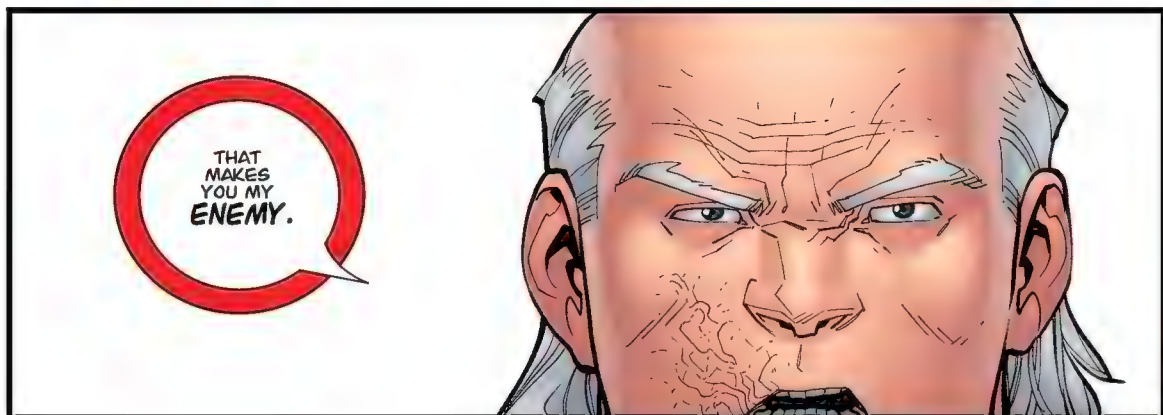
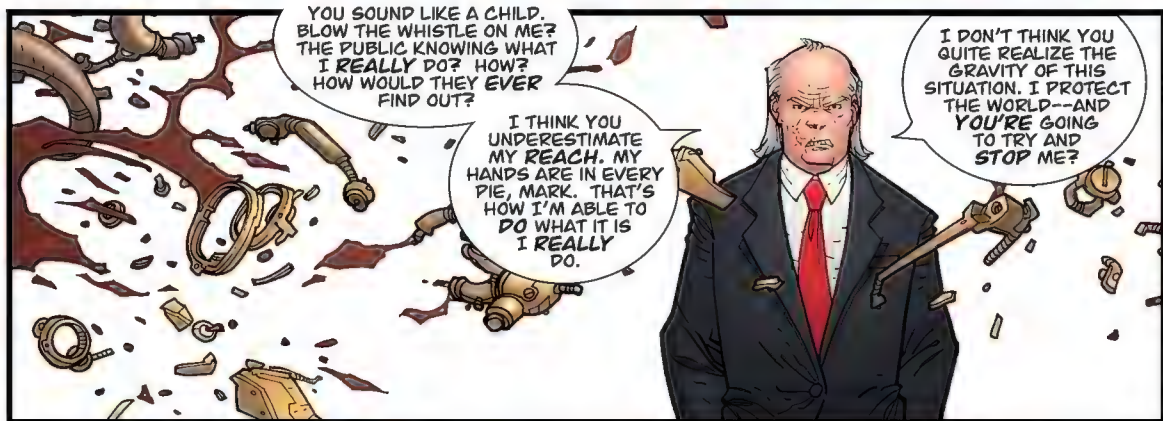
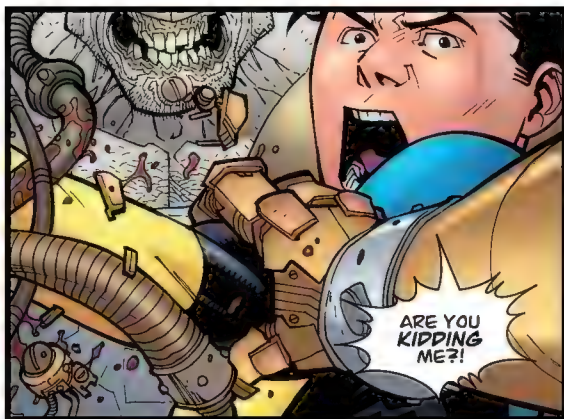
# CHARACTER 50













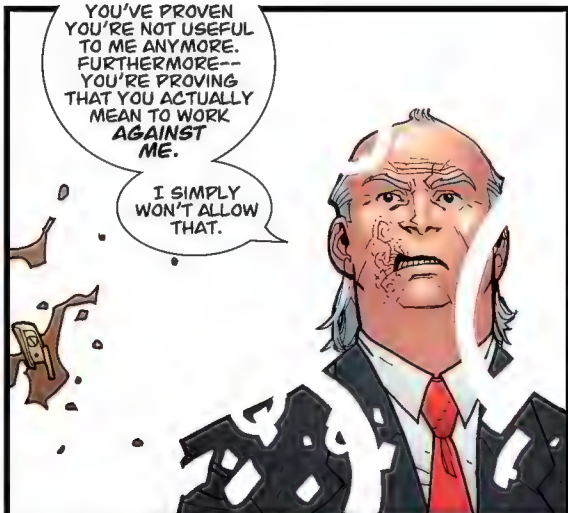
WHAT--I HAVEN'T  
KILLED ENOUGH  
PEOPLE TO BE  
AN ALLY?!



YOU'RE  
INSANE!

YOU'VE PROVEN  
YOU'RE NOT USEFUL  
TO ME ANYMORE.  
FURTHERMORE--  
YOU'RE PROVING  
THAT YOU ACTUALLY  
MEAN TO WORK  
AGAINST  
ME.

I SIMPLY  
WON'T ALLOW  
THAT.

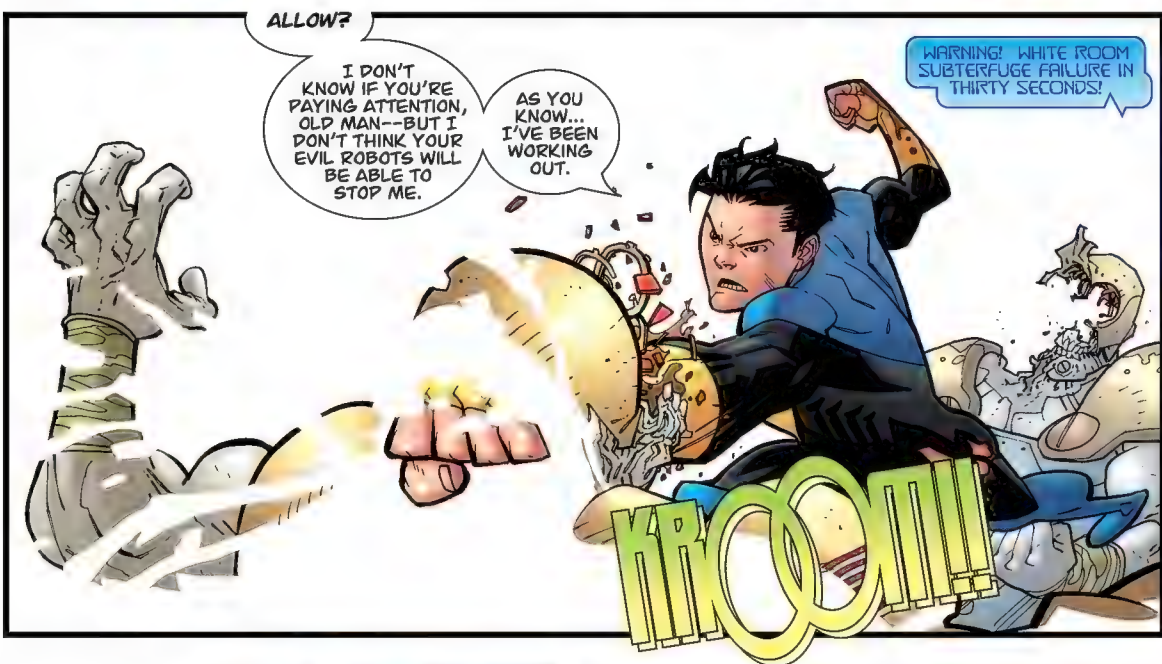


ALLOW?

I DON'T  
KNOW IF YOU'RE  
PAYING ATTENTION,  
OLD MAN--BUT I  
DON'T THINK YOUR  
EVIL ROBOTS WILL  
BE ABLE TO  
STOP ME.

AS YOU  
KNOW...  
I'VE BEEN  
WORKING  
OUT.

WARNING! WHITE ROOM  
SUBTERFUGE FAILURE IN  
THIRTY SECONDS!



CRAP.

WARNING! WHITE ROOM  
SUBTERFUGE FAILURE IN  
FIFTEEN SECONDS!



SO THAT'S IT? IS  
THAT ALL OF YOUR  
ROBOTS? YOU REALLY  
DIDN'T PLAN FOR  
THIS DID YOU?

DID YOU  
THINK I'D JUST  
GIVE UP AND  
STEP BACK  
IN LINE?

WHITE ROOM  
SUBTERFUGE  
FAILURE IN THREE...  
TWO... ONE...







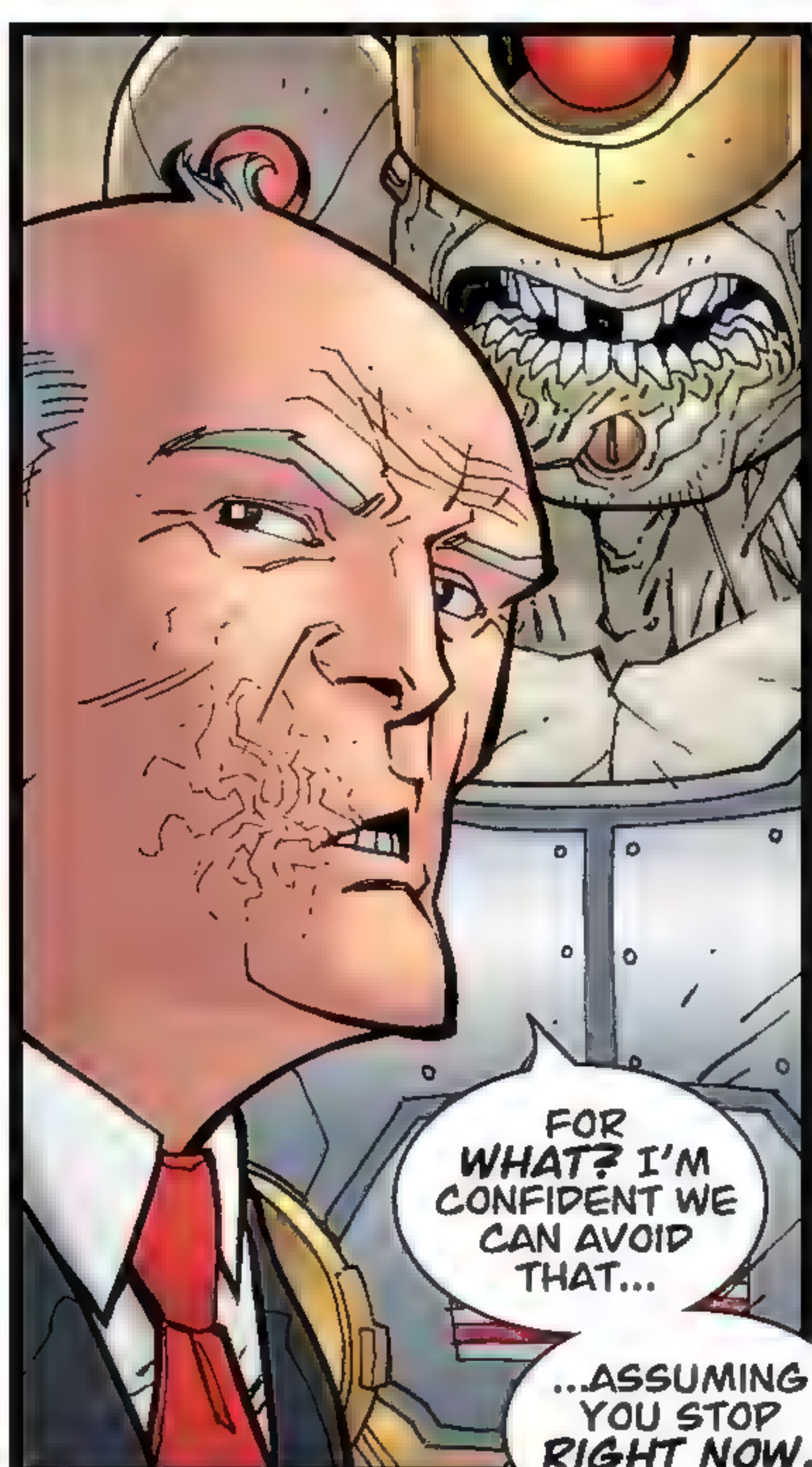
UH...

YEAH,  
WE COULD  
BE HERE ALL  
DAY AT THE  
RATE YOU'RE  
GOING.

SO WHY  
DON'T YOU  
JUST GIVE  
UP?



THEN  
WHAT? ARE  
YOU GOING  
TO ARREST  
ME?



FOR  
WHAT? I'M  
CONFIDENT WE  
CAN AVOID  
THAT...

...ASSUMING  
YOU STOP  
RIGHT NOW.



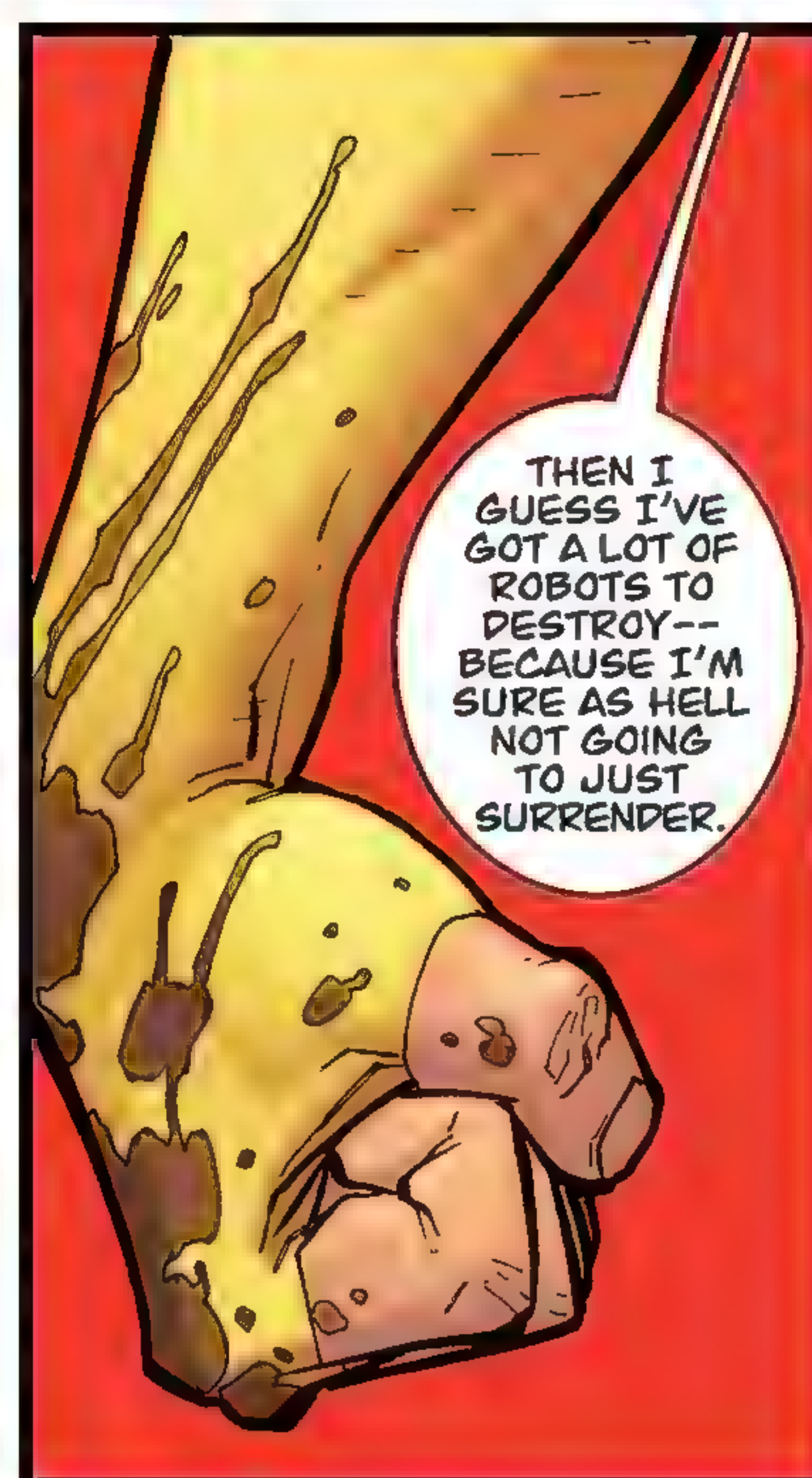
THEN WHAT? WE JUST  
FORGET THIS EVER  
HAPPENED? FORGET  
YOU'VE GOT DOCTOR  
FRANKENSTEIN RUNNING  
FREE--MAKING ZOMBIE  
SOLDIERS--PRETEND  
YOU'RE NOT HIRING  
MURDERERS?!

HOW  
ABOUT THIS--  
YOU ARREST D.A.  
SINCLAIR AND  
DARKWING--AND  
I'LL THINK ABOUT  
STANDING  
DOWN.



IF YOU'RE NOT GOING  
TO CONTINUE WORKING  
FOR ME--THEN I'LL  
NEED THEM MORE  
THAN EVER.

NO, I'M  
SORRY THAT  
ME WORKING WITH  
THEM INTERFERES  
WITH YOUR STRICT  
VIEWS ON RIGHT AND  
WRONG THAT ARE  
BORN OUT OF A NEED  
TO PROVE YOU'RE NOT  
YOUR FATHER--BUT  
I WON'T STOP  
WORKING WITH  
THEM ANY TIME  
SOON.



THEN I  
GUESS I'VE  
GOT A LOT OF  
ROBOTS TO  
DESTROY--  
BECAUSE I'M  
SURE AS HELL  
NOT GOING  
TO JUST  
SURRENDER.



ACTUALLY, I THINK  
YOU'VE COST THE  
AMERICAN TAXPAYERS  
QUITE ENOUGH ALREADY.  
I'VE GOT A MUCH MORE  
EFFICIENT WAY OF  
KEEPING YOU IN  
CHECK.





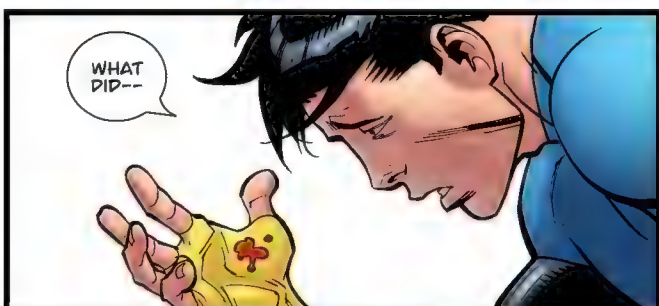
REBOOTING. WHITE ROOM  
SUBTERFUGE RESTORED  
IN 3... 2... 1...



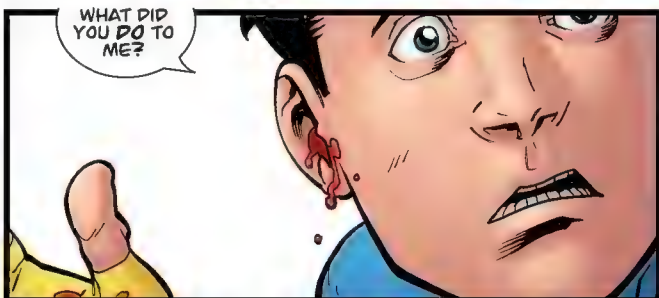
IT DOESN'T HAVE TO  
BE THIS WAY, MARK.  
THE ONLY THING I  
ASK IS THAT YOU  
BE REASONABLE,  
THINK THIS  
OVER.

GIVE ME  
A CHANCE TO  
CONVINCE YOU  
THAT I'M RIGHT.  
EVERYTHING I'VE  
DONE FOR YOU--  
YOUR FAMILY,  
ALL THE TIME  
WE'VE WORKED  
TOGETHER...

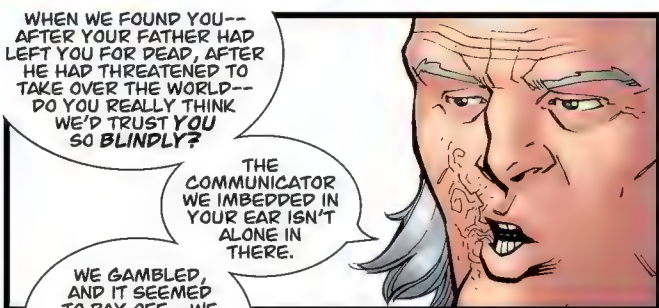
I THINK YOU AT  
LEAST OWE  
ME THAT  
MUCH.



WHAT  
DID--



WHAT DID  
YOU DO TO  
ME?



WHEN WE FOUND YOU--  
AFTER YOUR FATHER HAD  
LEFT YOU FOR DEAD, AFTER  
HE HAD THREATENED TO  
TAKE OVER THE WORLD--  
DO YOU REALLY THINK  
WE'D TRUST YOU  
SO BLINDLY?

THE  
COMMUNICATOR  
WE IMBEDDED IN  
YOUR EAR ISN'T  
ALONE IN  
THERE.



WE GAMBLERD,  
AND IT SEEMED  
TO PAY OFF--WE  
FIGURED YOUR  
EQUILIBRIUM WASN'T  
AS INVULNERABLE  
AS YOU ARE.

WE WERE  
RIGHT. IT  
LOOKS LIKE  
WE'VE FOUND A  
WEAKNESS.

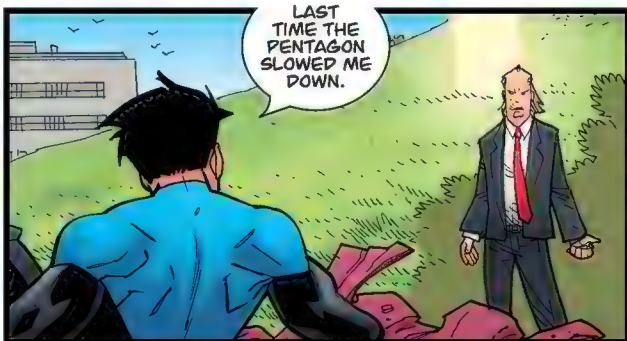
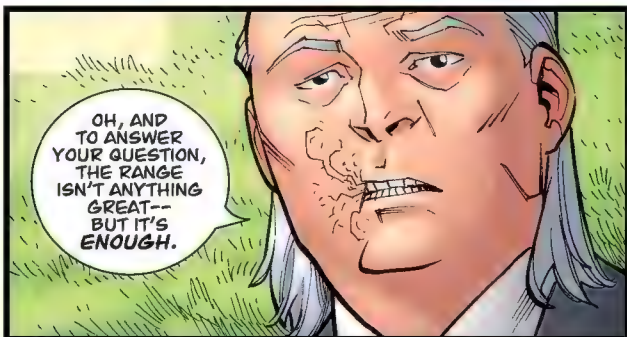
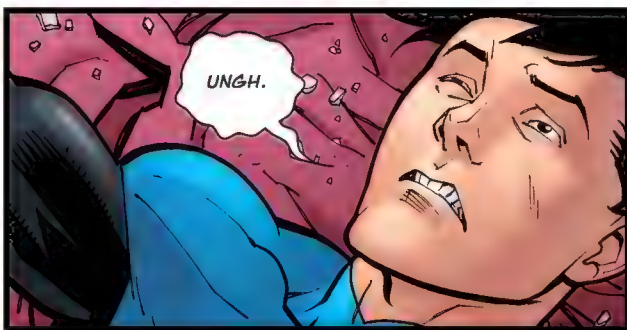
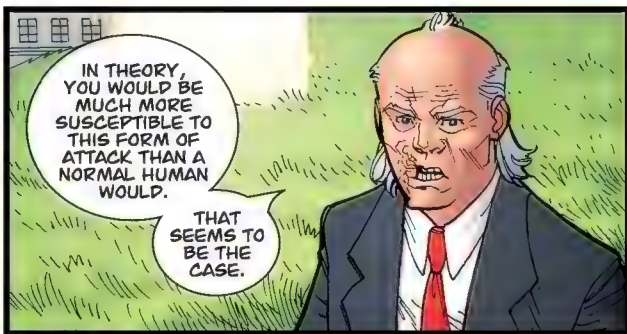
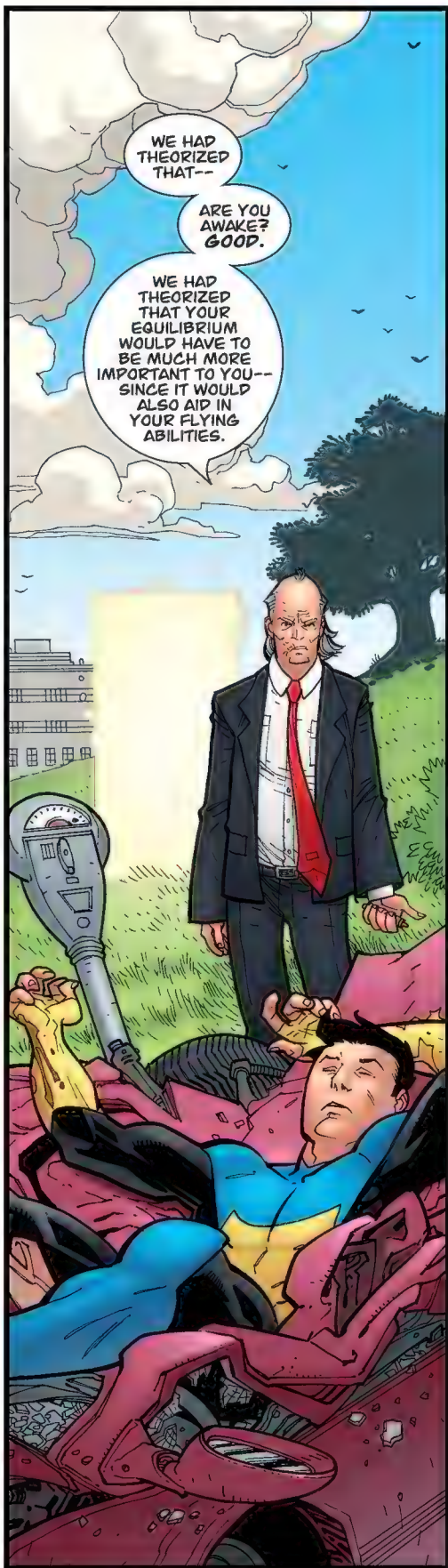




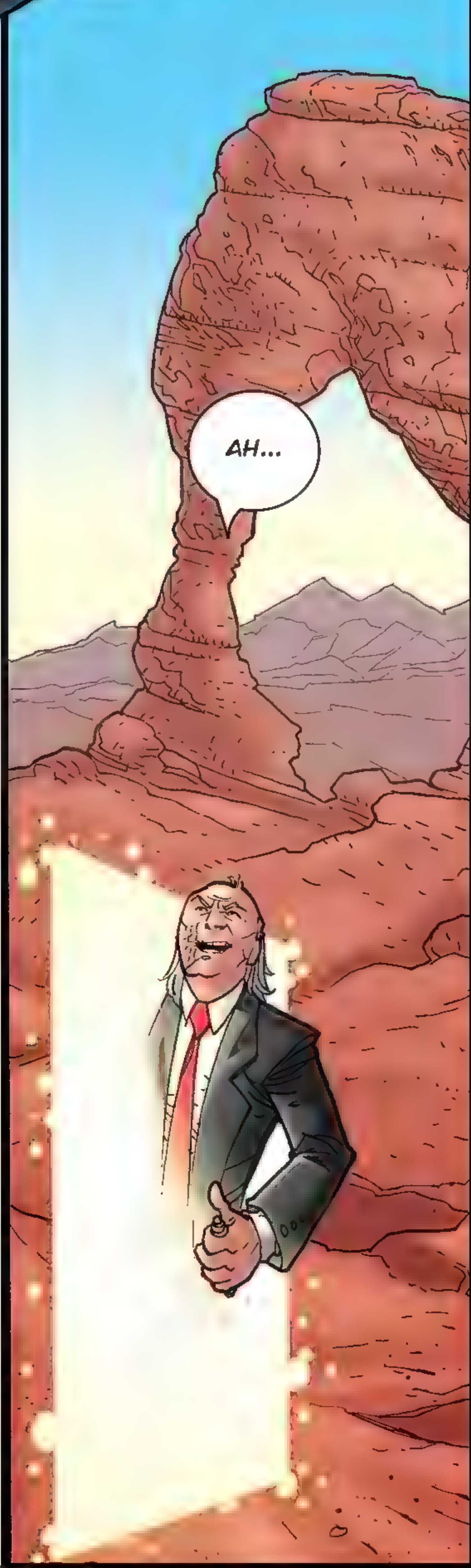
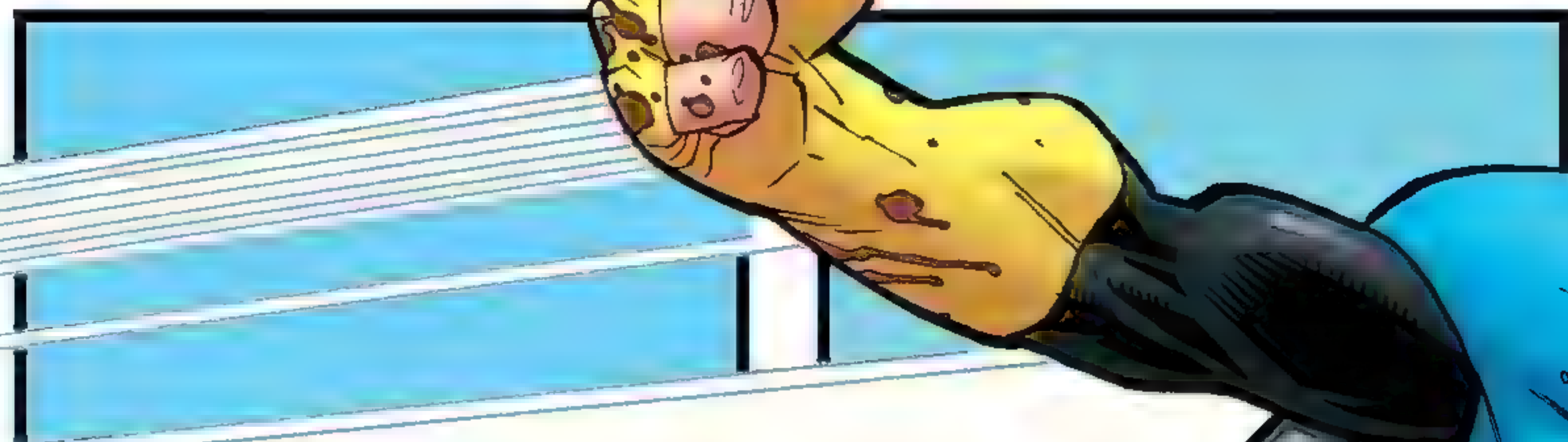
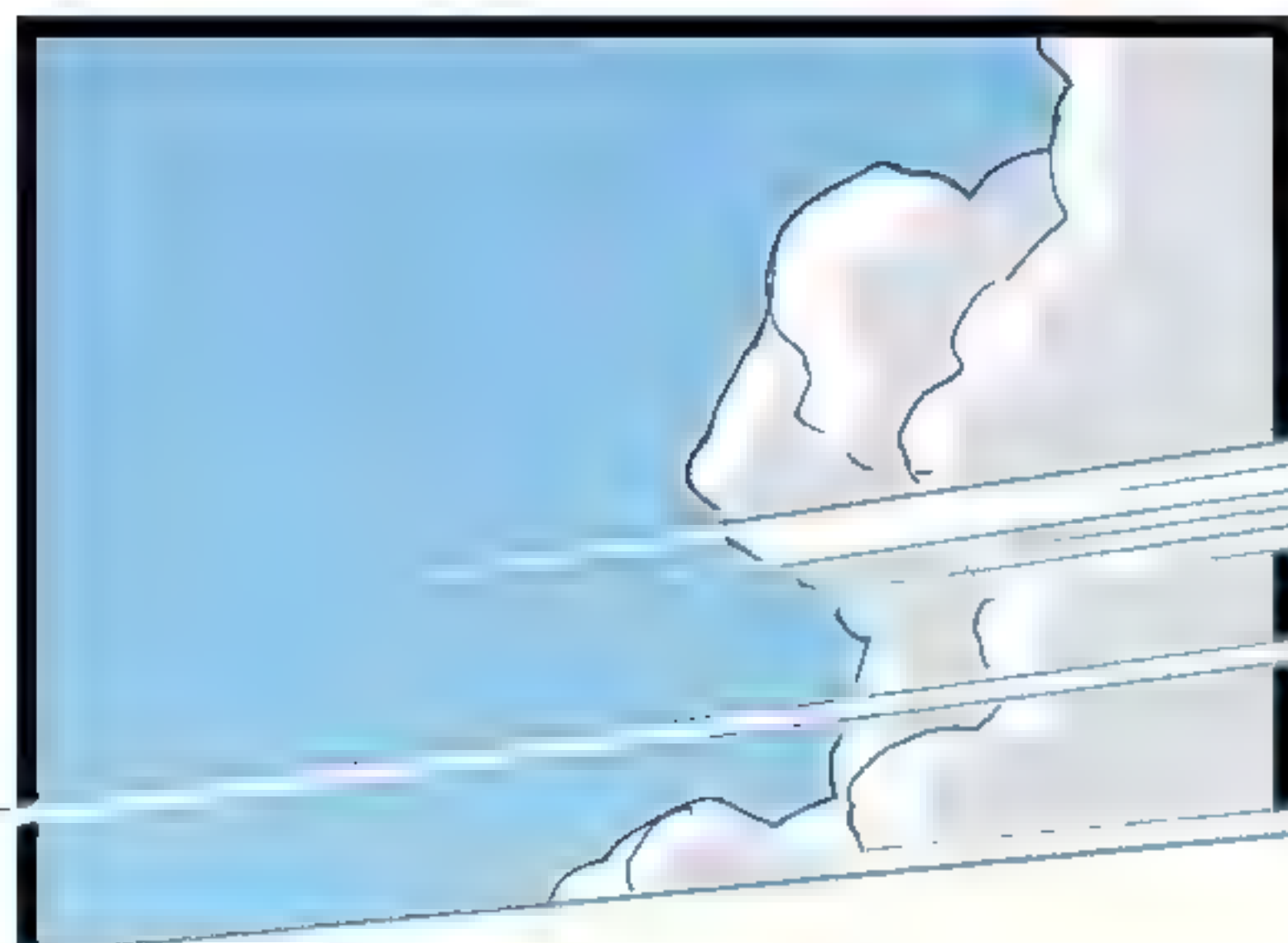
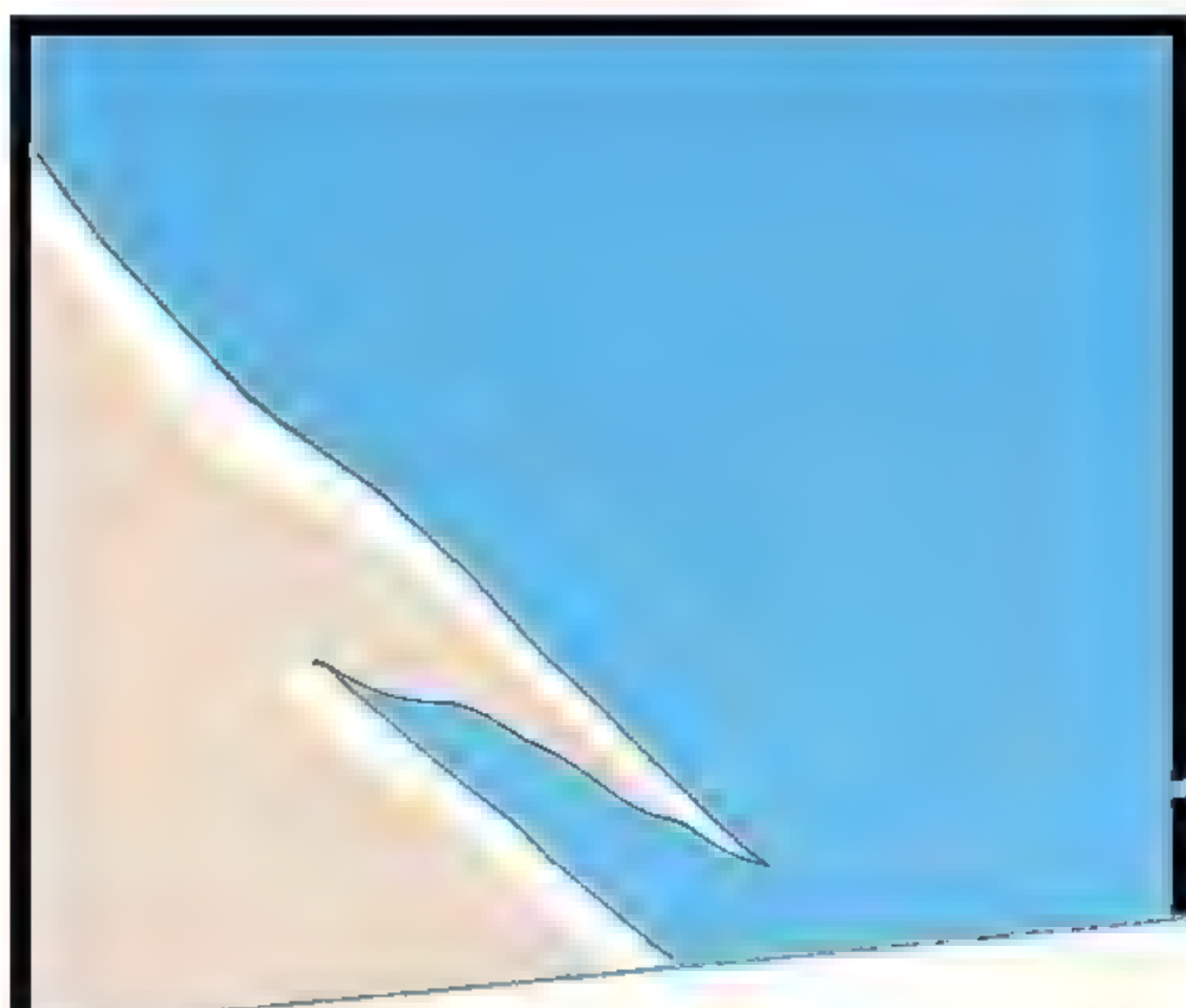








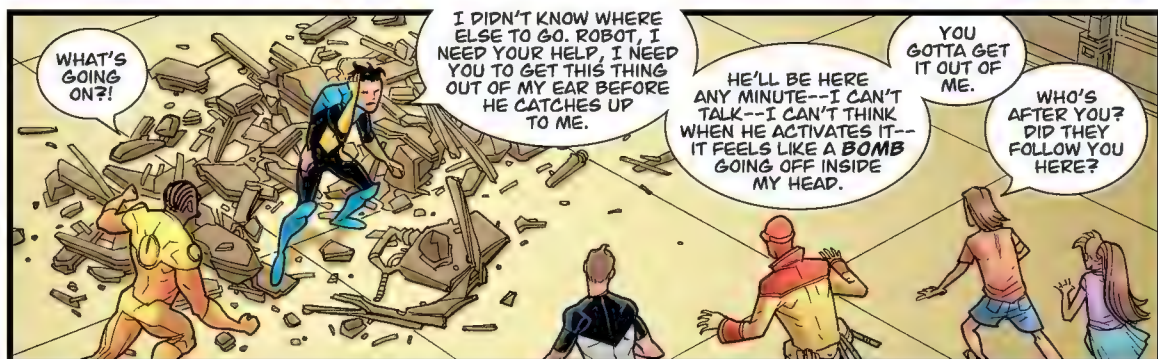
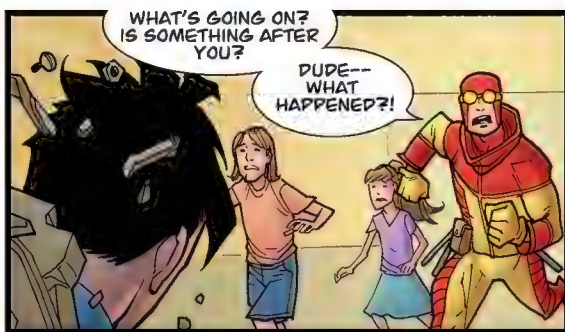
















I KNOW SOME OF YOU CONSIDER YOURSELVES TO BE FRIENDS WITH INVINCIBLE, I WOULD HAVE DONE THE SAME BEFORE TODAY--BUT LISTEN TO ME WHEN I SAY THIS--HE IS NO FRIEND TO ANY OF US NOW.

HE IS DOING EVERYTHING HE CAN TO COMPROMISE THE SECURITY OF THIS PLANET. HE IS UNDERMINING ME AND MY ORGANIZATION--THE ORGANIZATION THAT FUNDS THIS TEAM.

I HATE THAT IT'S COME TO THIS, BUT I MUST ASK YOU TO HELP ME RESTRAIN HIM.

WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU, INVINCIBLE? YOU'VE BEEN ACTING LIKE A MANIAC SINCE WE DEFEATED DOC SEISMIC EARLIER.

DON'T LISTEN TO HIM--HE'S NOT TELLING YOU THE WHOLE STORY!

HE'S EMPLOYING MURDERERS! THE MAN WHO HELPED US STOP DOC SEISMIC, DARKWING, HE'S A MURDERER--I KNOW YOU DON'T BELIEVE ME BUT IT'S TRUE.

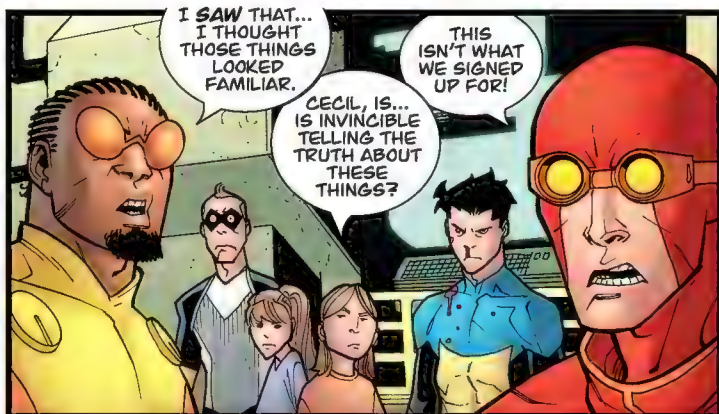
I WAS SENT INTO MIDNIGHT CITY BY CECIL--SENT IN TO STOP A MURDERER. I FOUND OUT IT WAS DARKWING, HE'D SNAPPED, HE WAS KILLING ANYONE WHO BROKE THE LAW.

I ARRESTED HIM--I THOUGHT HE WAS IN JAIL. CECIL SUPPRESSED THE TRUTH--PUT HIM ON THE PAYROLL!

I KNOW DARKWING. HE WAS ALWAYS ARROGANT, EVEN HATEFUL... BUT I DON'T SEE HIM BEING A MURDERER.

THESE ROBOTS--THESE REANIMEN HE'S GOT WITH HIM. THEY WERE INVENTED BY A MAN WHO BUILT THEM AROUND HOMELESS PEOPLE AND COLLEGE STUDENTS--MY FRIENDS. THEY ATTACKED MY COLLEGE CAMPUS TWICE--YOU HAD TO SEE THAT ON THE NEWS!

HE KILLED MORE THAN A DOZEN PEOPLE PERFECTING THOSE MONSTROSITIES.

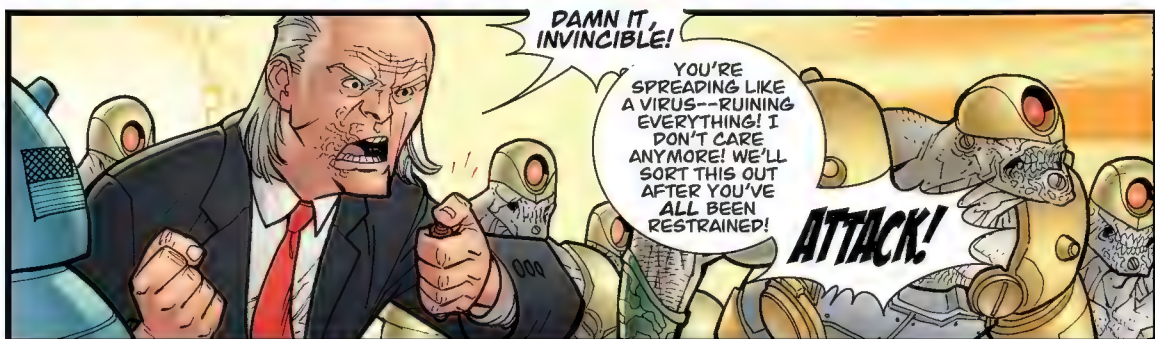


I SAW THAT... I THOUGHT THOSE THINGS LOOKED FAMILIAR.

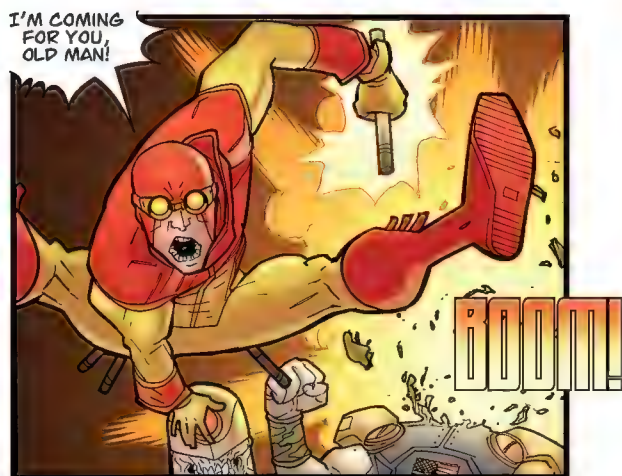
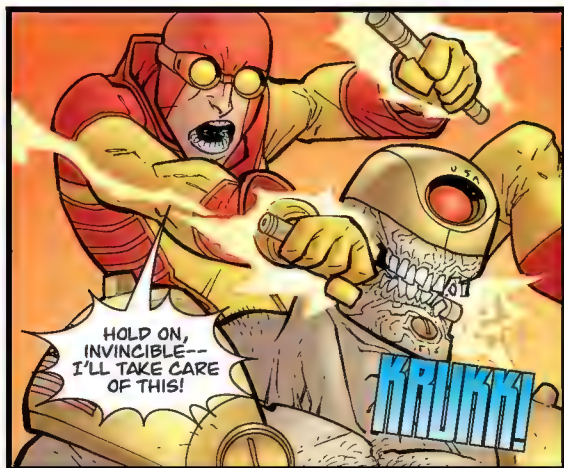
CECIL, IS... IS INVINCIBLE TELLING THE TRUTH ABOUT THESE THINGS?

THIS ISN'T WHAT WE SIGNED UP FOR!

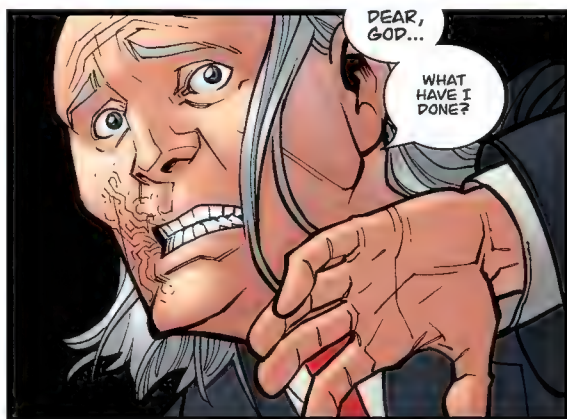
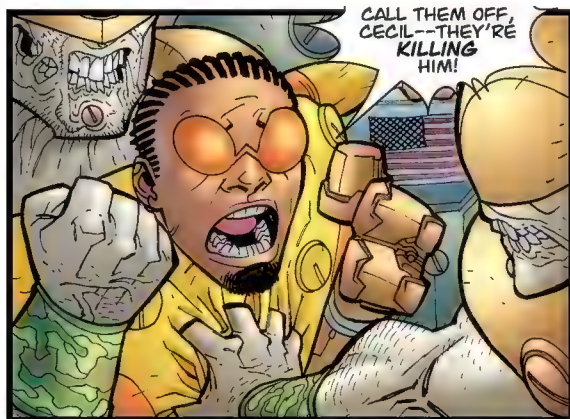
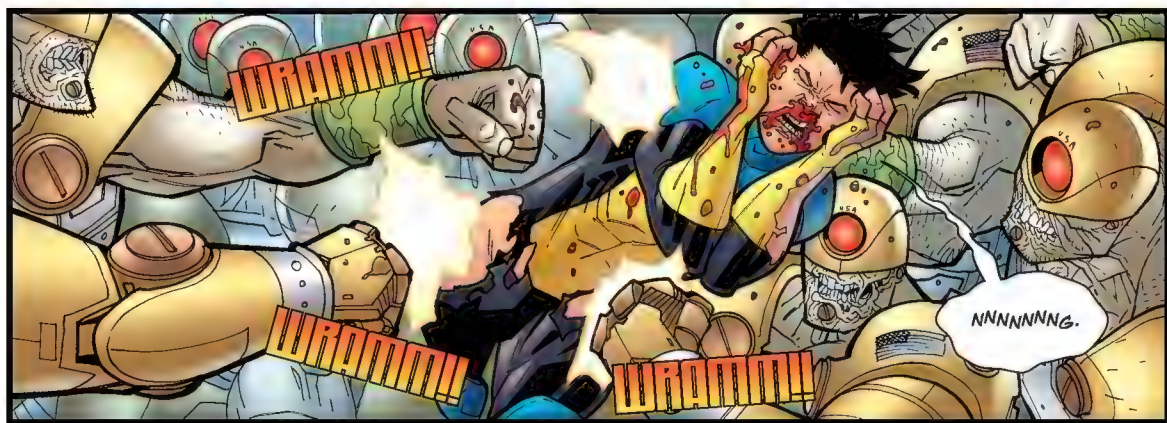
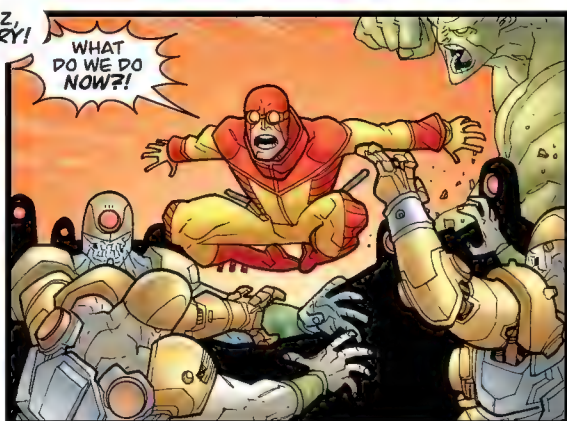
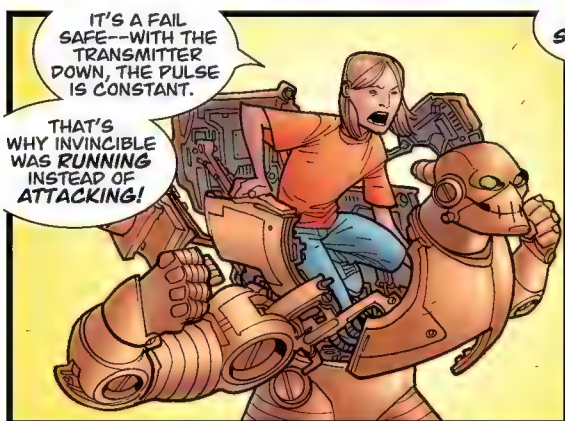




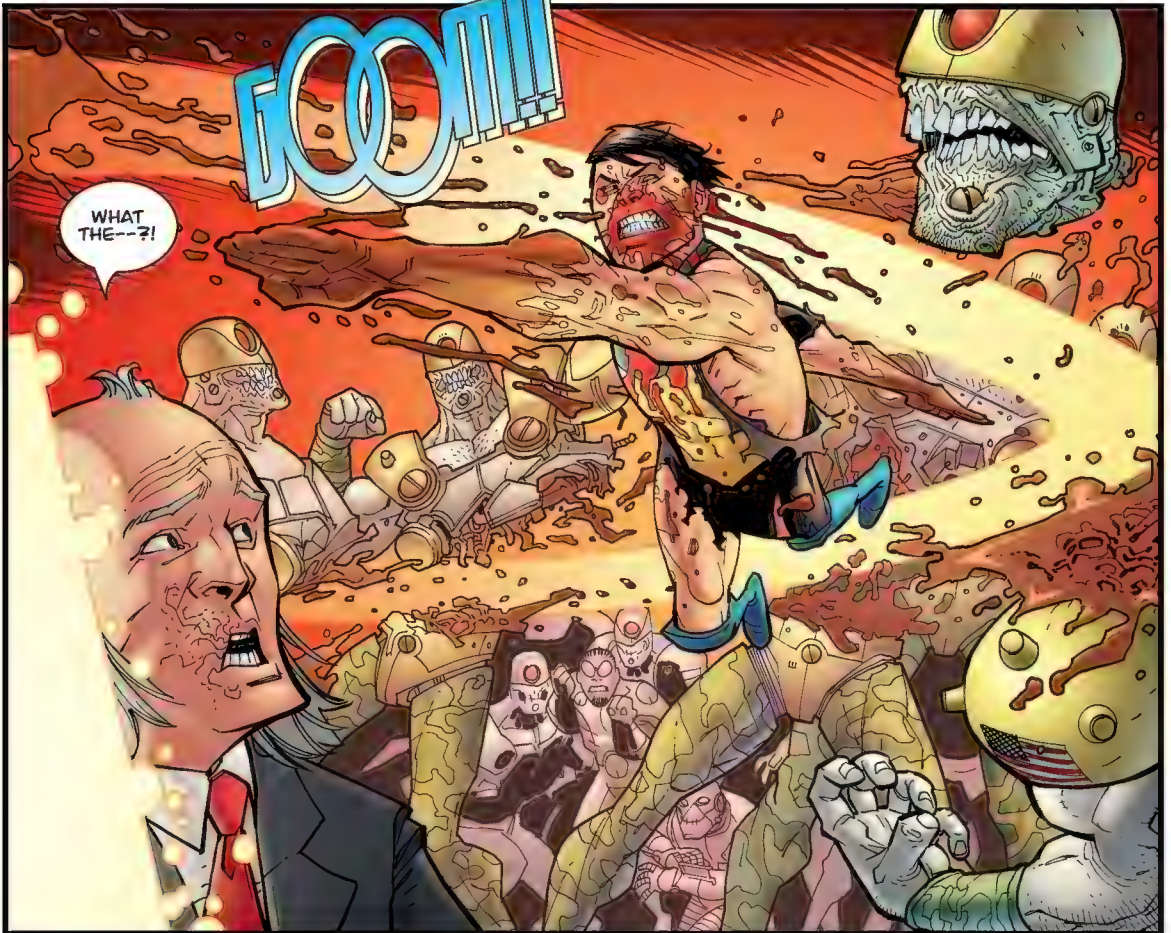
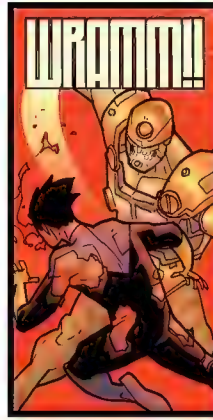




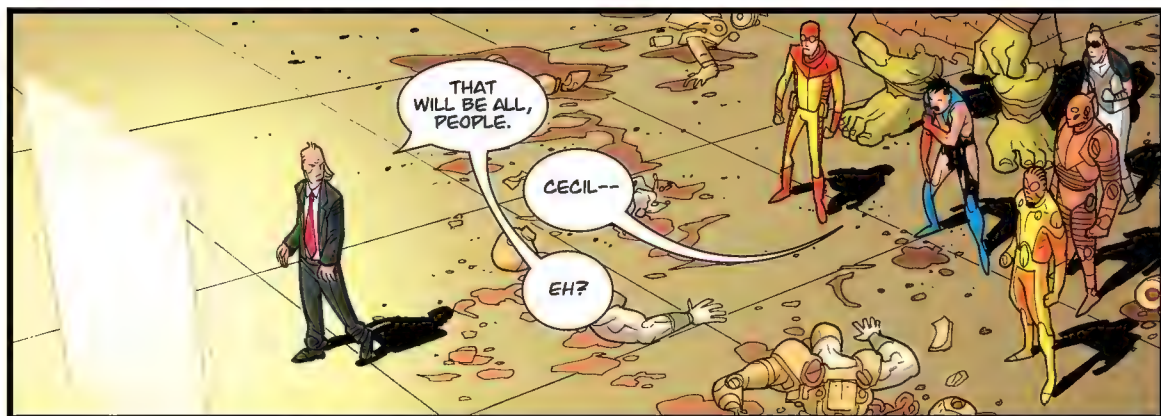
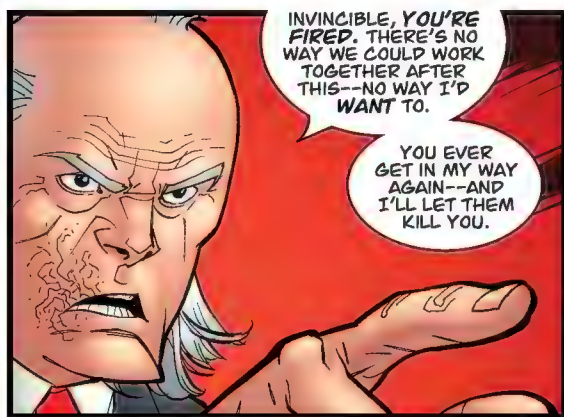
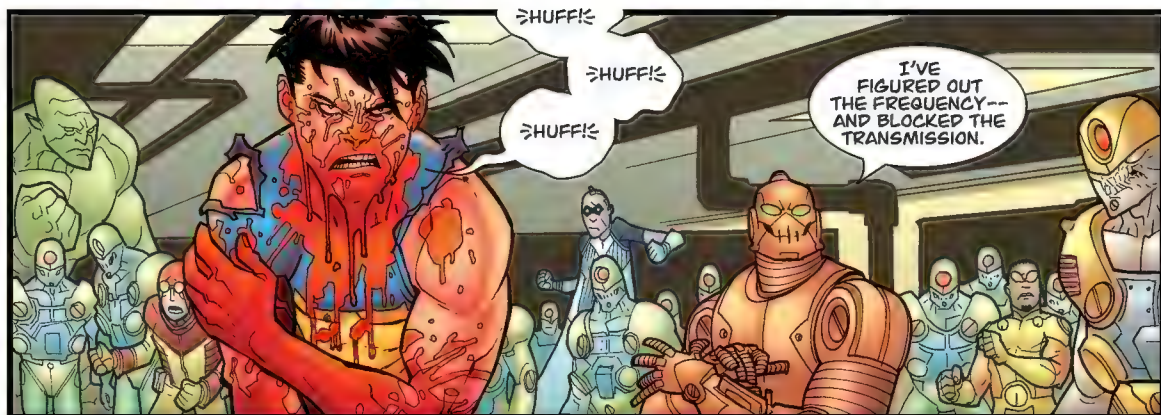




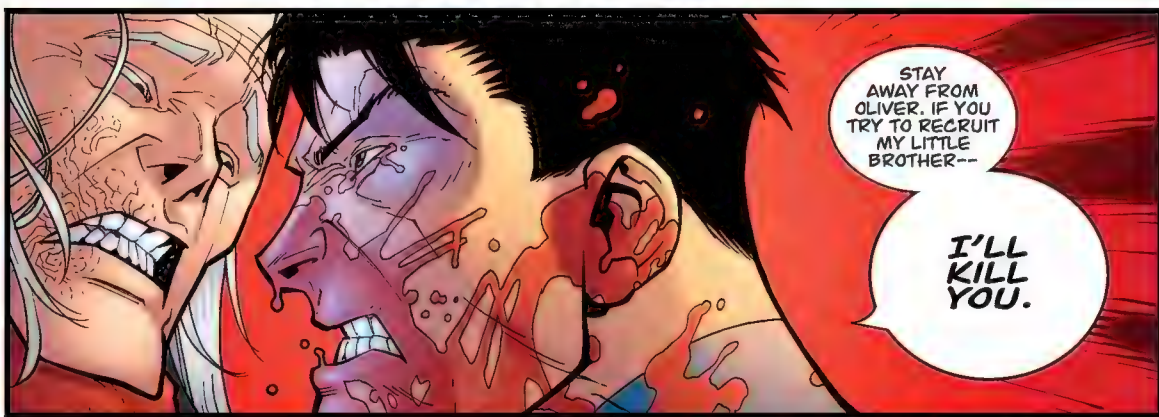




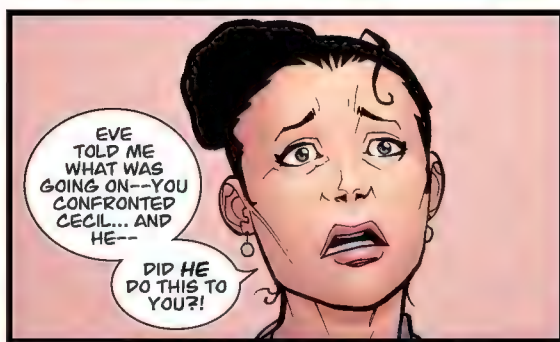
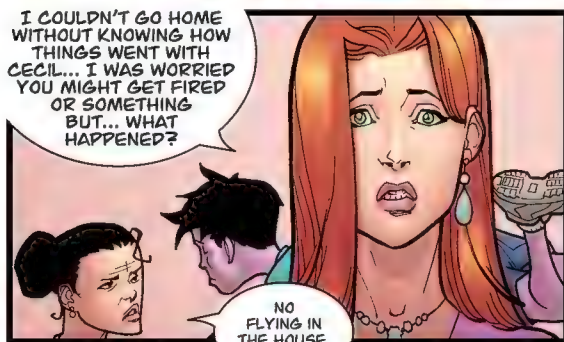
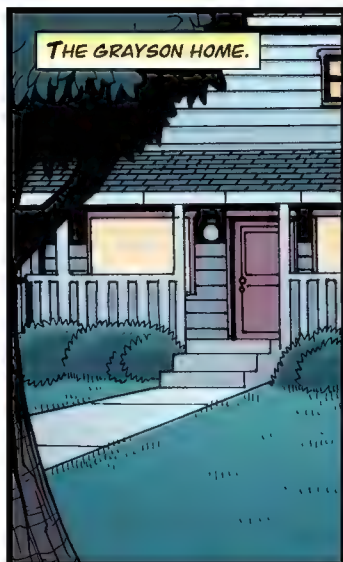




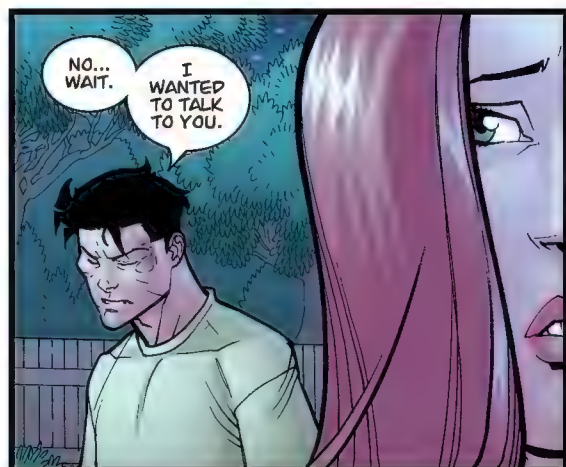
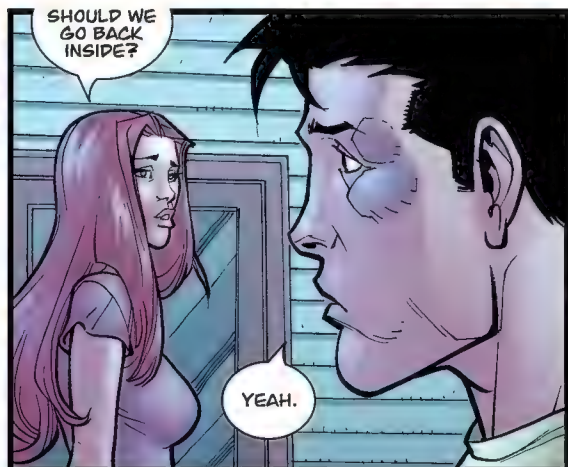
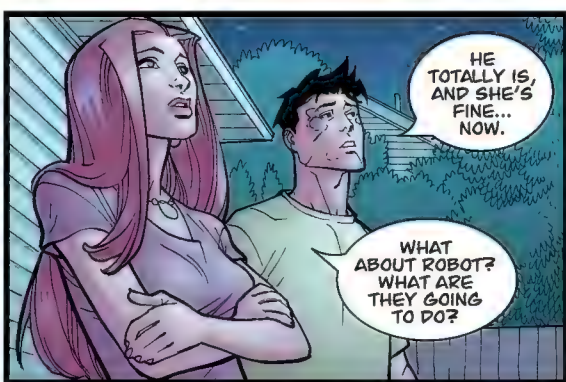




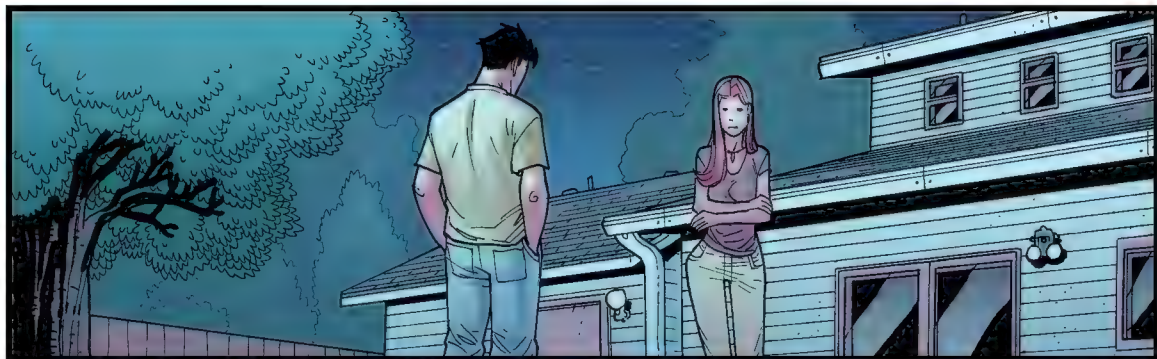
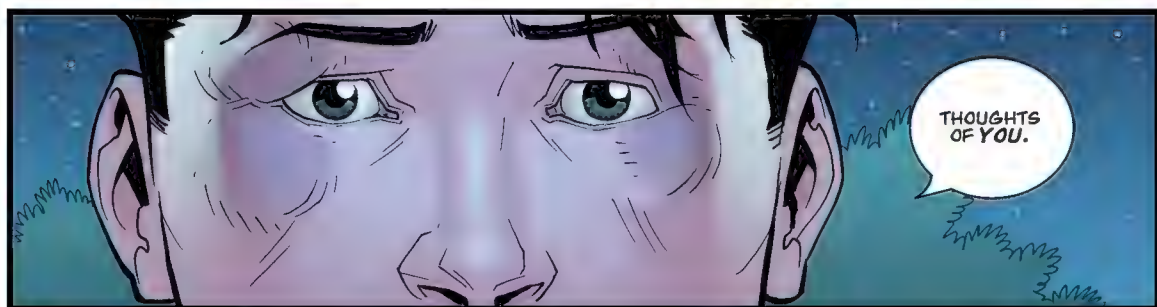
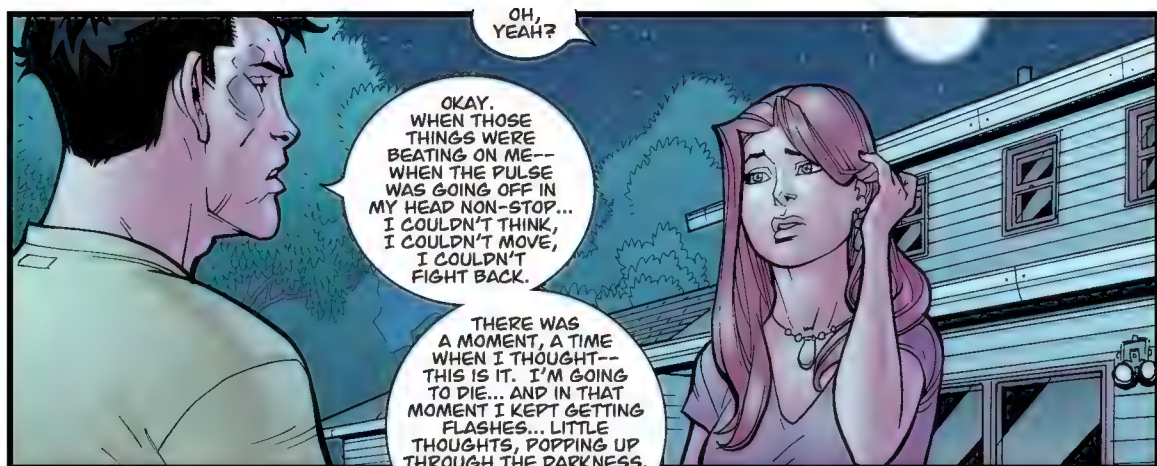




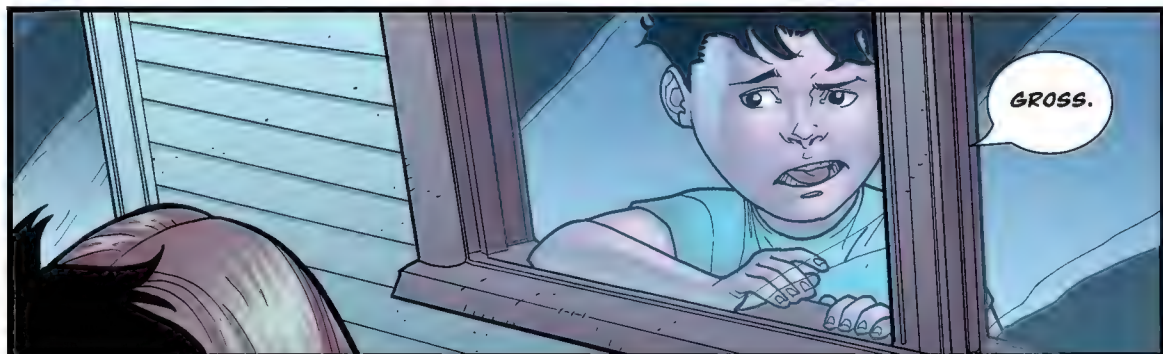










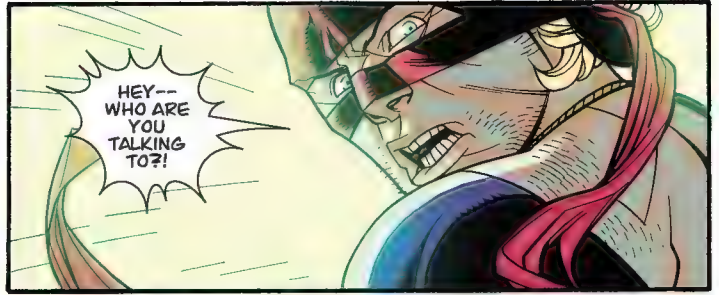
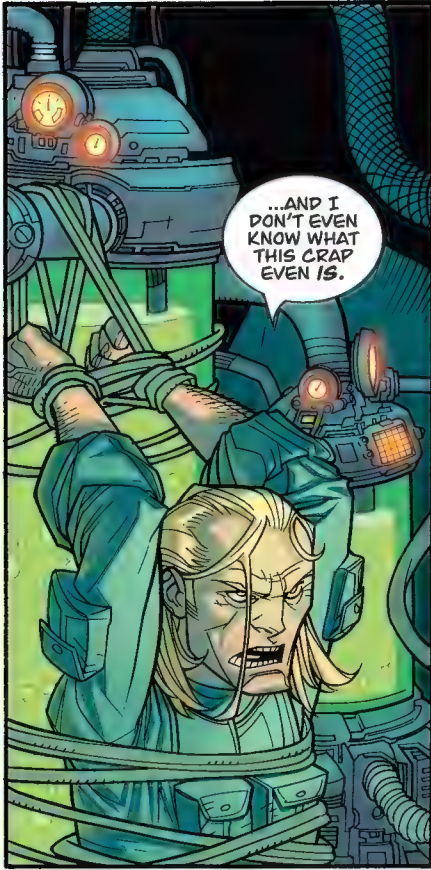




# AT LONG LAST--THE SECRET ORIGIN OF CECIL STEDMAN!









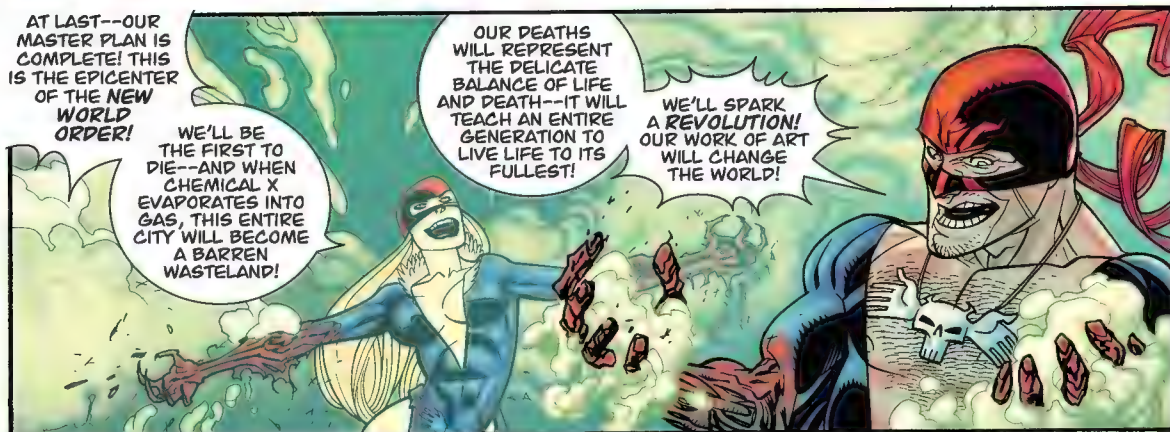


AT LAST--OUR  
MASTER PLAN IS  
COMPLETE! THIS  
IS THE EPICENTER  
OF THE NEW  
WORLD  
ORDER!

WE'LL BE  
THE FIRST TO  
DIE--AND WHEN  
CHEMICAL X  
EVAPORATES INTO  
GAS, THIS ENTIRE  
CITY WILL BECOME  
A BARREN  
WASTELAND!

OUR DEATHS  
WILL REPRESENT  
THE DELICATE  
BALANCE OF LIFE  
AND DEATH--IT WILL  
TEACH AN ENTIRE  
GENERATION TO  
LIVE LIFE TO ITS  
FULLEST!

WE'LL SPARK  
A REVOLUTION!  
OUR WORK OF ART  
WILL CHANGE  
THE WORLD!



STOW IT,  
CRAZIES!

HQ--LISTEN  
UP! WE'VE GOT  
A SITUATION  
HERE!

CHEMICAL  
X HAS BEEN  
RELEASED!



WE NEED TO  
QUARANTINE A  
THREE MILE  
RADIUS AROUND  
MY LOCATION,  
DOUBLE  
FAST!

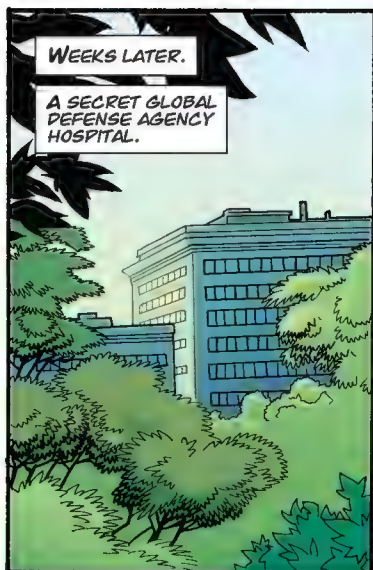
AGENT  
STEPMAN IS  
DOWN! I REPEAT,  
AGENT STEPMAN  
IS DOWN! I NEED  
A MED-EVAC  
EQUIPPED WITH  
SAFE-SUITS  
ON SITE  
NOW!

CECIL!  
CECIL--CAN  
YOU HEAR  
ME?

GET IT--  
OFF--







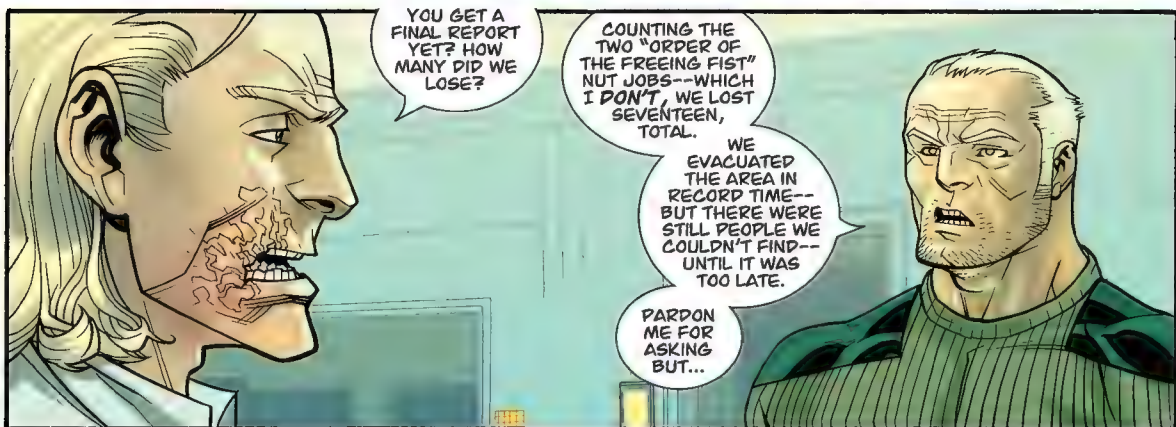
WEEKS LATER.

A SECRET GLOBAL  
DEFENSE AGENCY  
HOSPITAL.



THEY'RE  
LETTING  
YOU OUT  
ALREADY?

YEAH, I'M  
TIP TOP. SO  
YOU PICKED THE  
PERFECT TIME  
TO FINALLY COME  
AND VISIT.

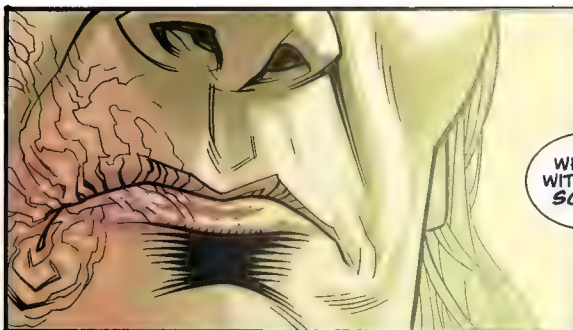


YOU GET A  
FINAL REPORT  
YET? HOW  
MANY DID WE  
LOSE?

COUNTING THE  
TWO "ORDER OF  
THE FREING FIST"  
NUT JOBS--WHICH  
I DON'T, WE LOST  
SEVENTEEN,  
TOTAL.

WE  
EVACUATED  
THE AREA IN  
RECORD TIME--  
BUT THERE WERE  
STILL PEOPLE WE  
COULDN'T FIND--  
UNTIL IT WAS  
TOO LATE.

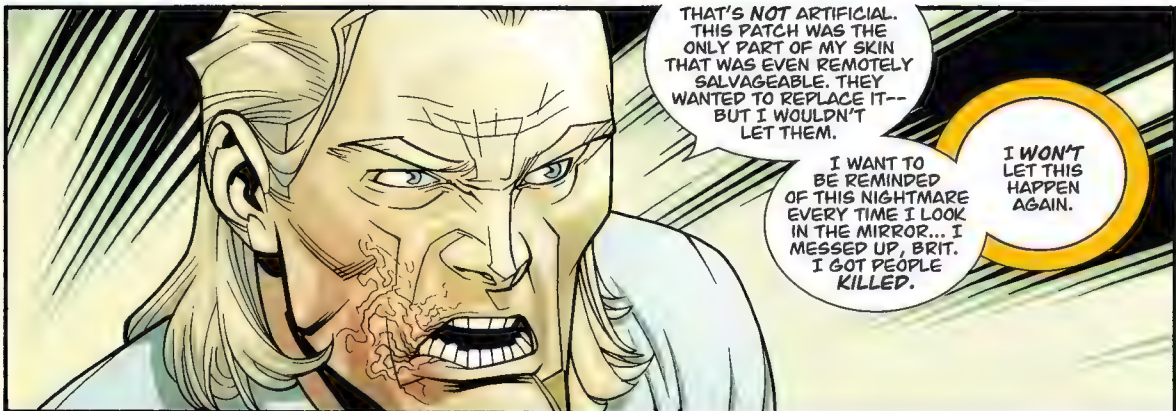
PARDON  
ME FOR  
ASKING  
BUT...



WHAT'S  
WITH THE  
SCAR?



DID THEY  
MESS UP WHEN  
THEY WERE  
APPLYING THE  
ARTIFICIAL  
SKIN? WHAT  
GIVES?



THAT'S NOT ARTIFICIAL.  
THIS PATCH WAS THE  
ONLY PART OF MY SKIN  
THAT WAS EVEN REMOTELY  
SALVAGEABLE. THEY  
WANTED TO REPLACE IT--  
BUT I WOULDN'T  
LET THEM.

I WANT TO  
BE REMINDED  
OF THIS NIGHTMARE  
EVERY TIME I LOOK  
IN THE MIRROR... I  
MESSED UP, BRIT.  
I GOT PEOPLE  
KILLED.

I WON'T  
LET THIS  
HAPPEN  
AGAIN.

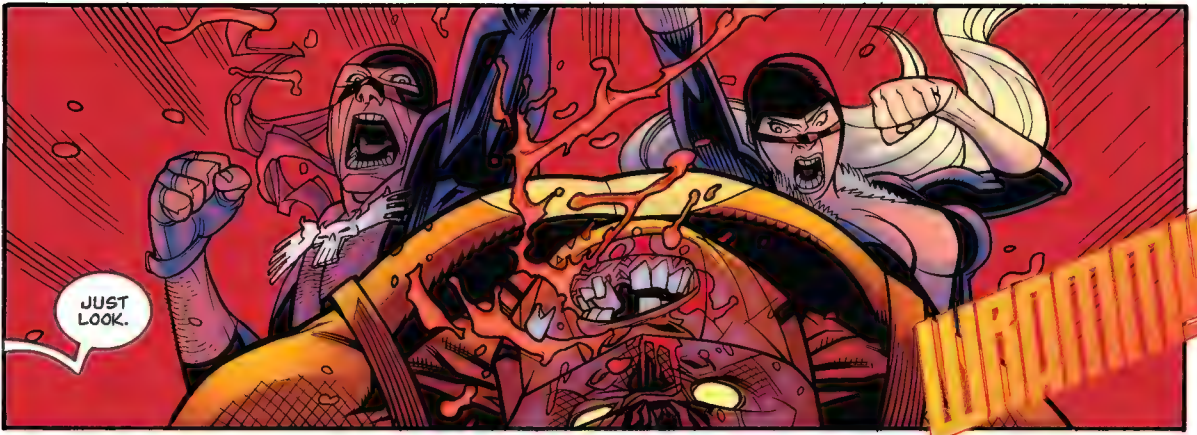












JUST  
LOOK.

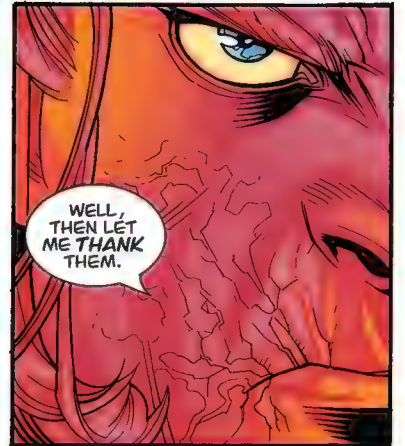


THIS MAKES WHAT  
THEY DID OKAY?!  
WHAT THEY DID TO  
ME?! THEY KILLED  
FIFTEEN PEOPLE FOR  
GOD'S SAKE!



THEY GET  
A CLEAN  
SLATE?!

WE'D BE  
DEAD RIGHT  
NOW IF  
IT WASN'T  
FOR THEM.



WELL,  
THEN LET  
ME THANK  
THEM.

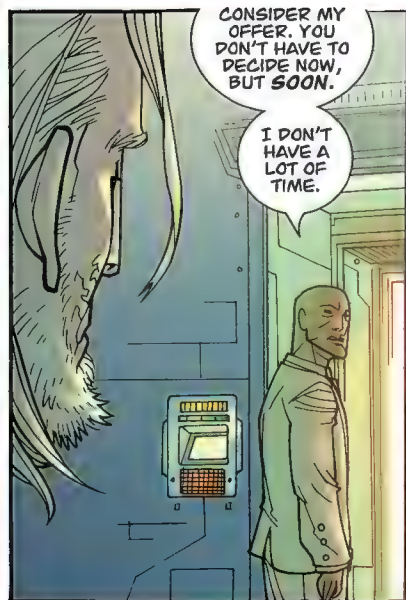
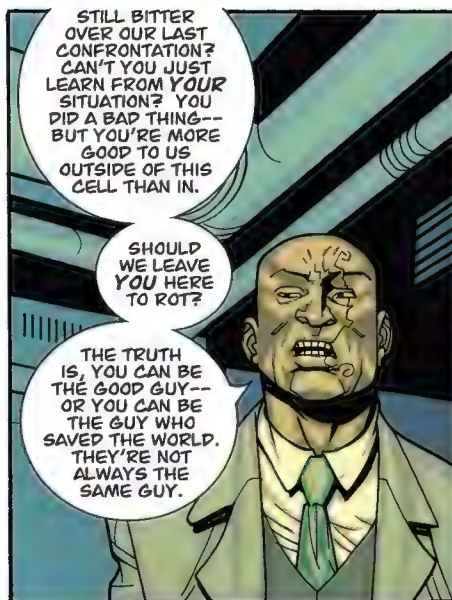
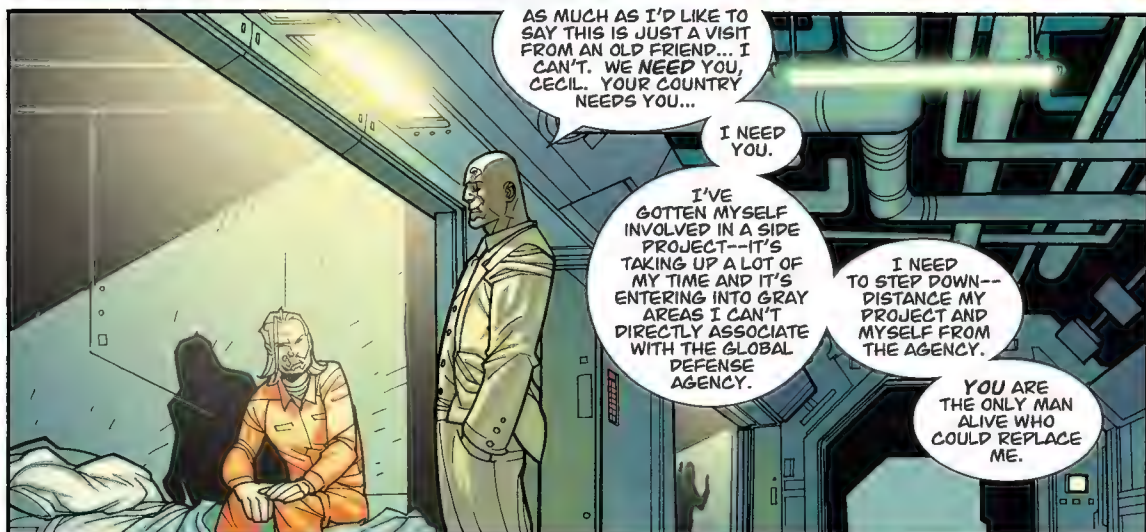
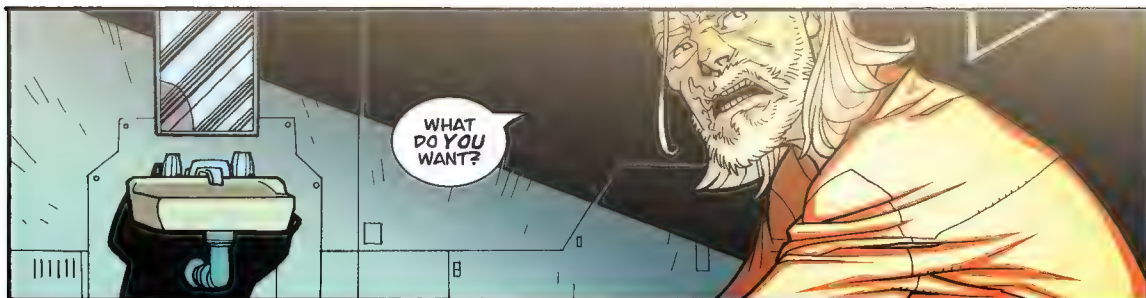


OH, MY  
GOD...

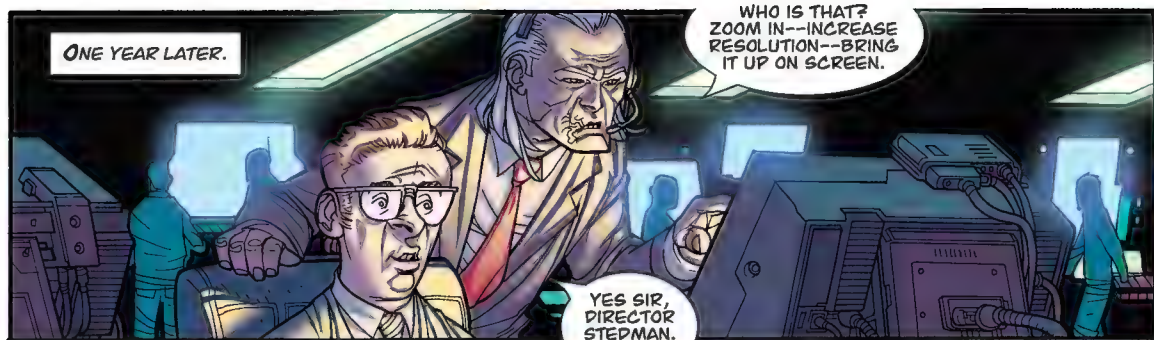




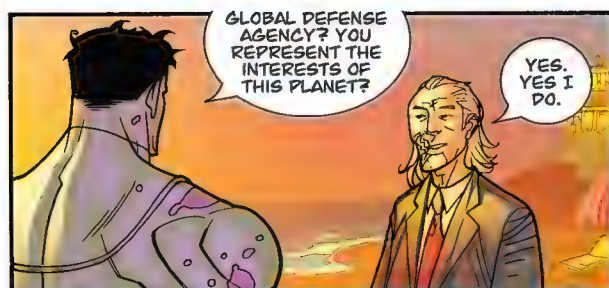




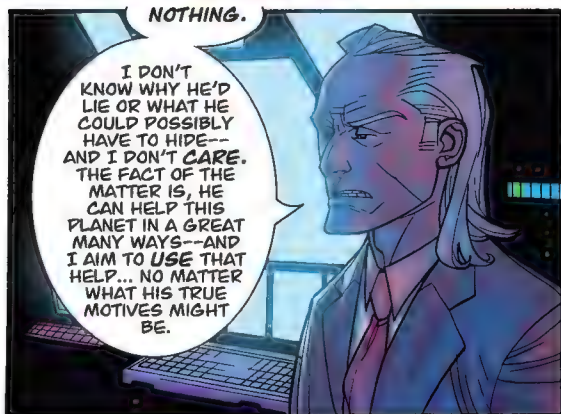


















# CHAPTER 51

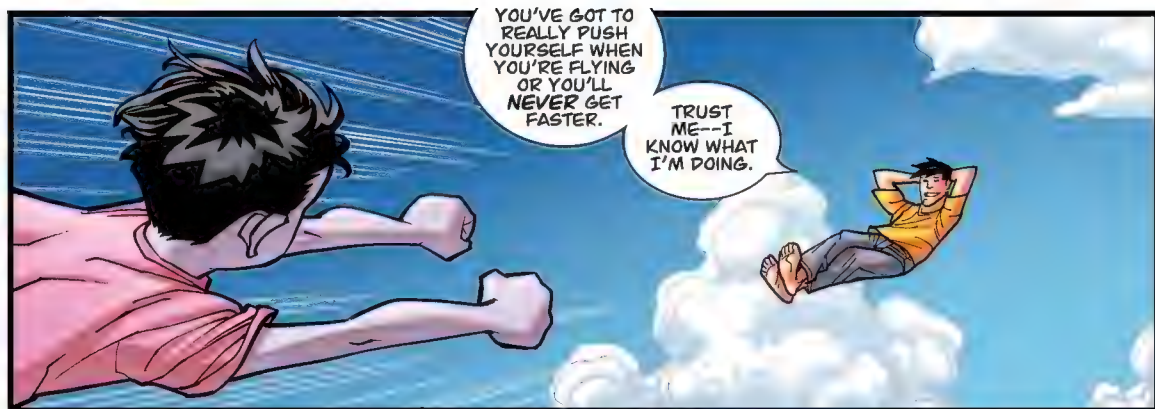


SMILE  
07

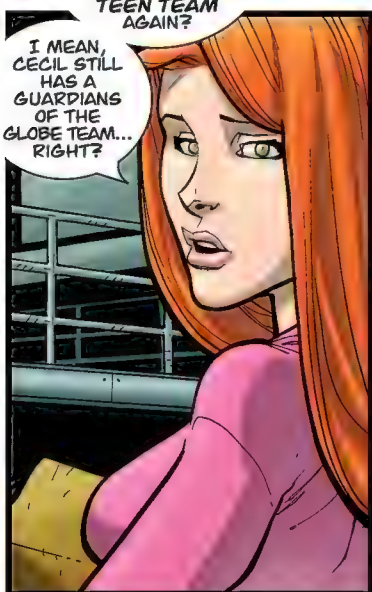
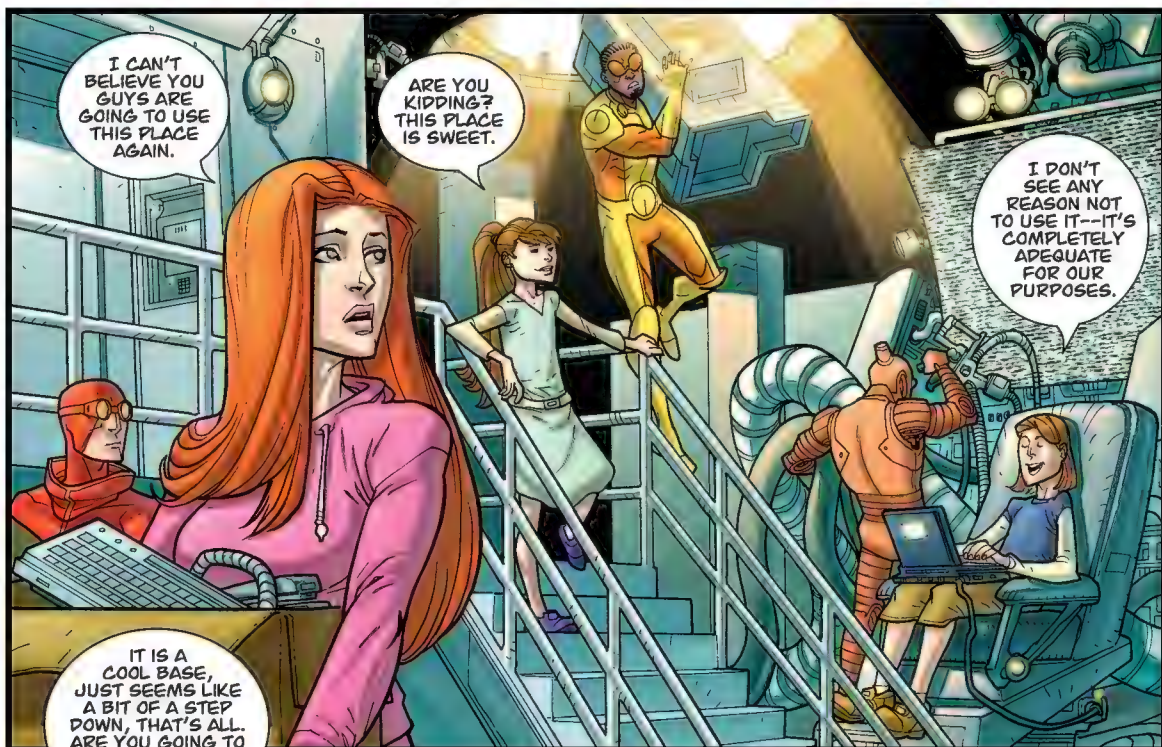
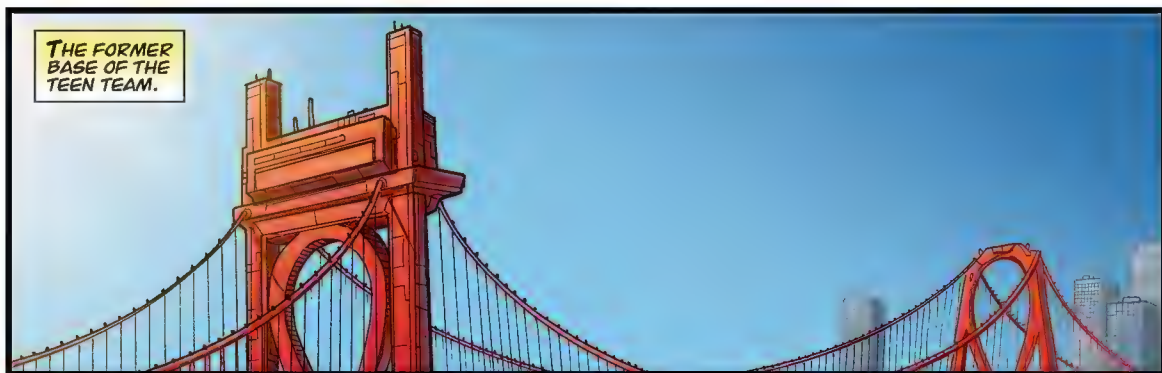




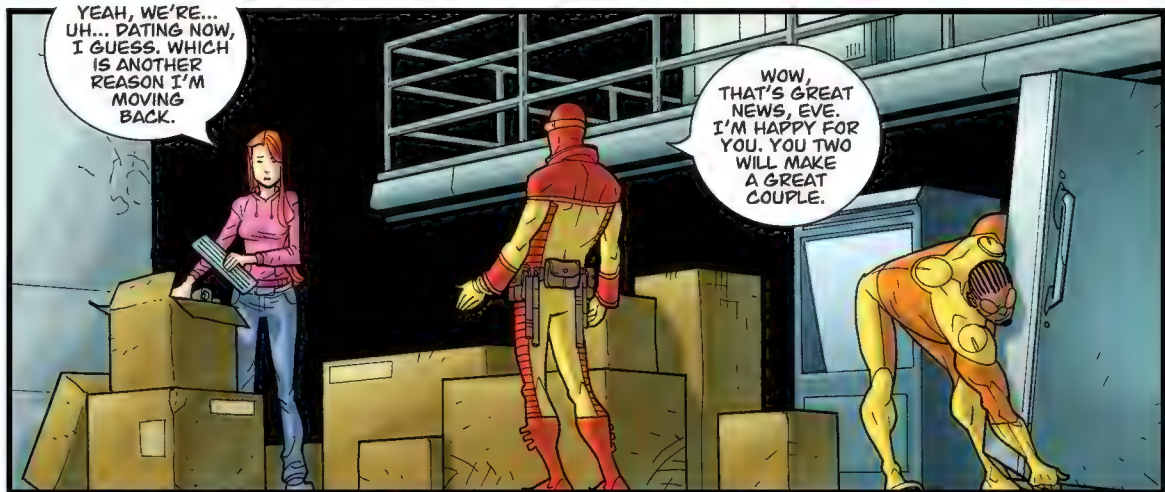
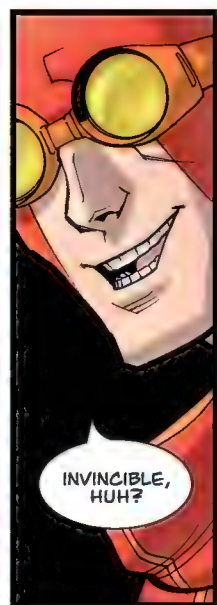
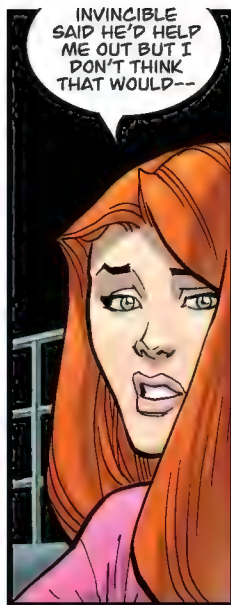






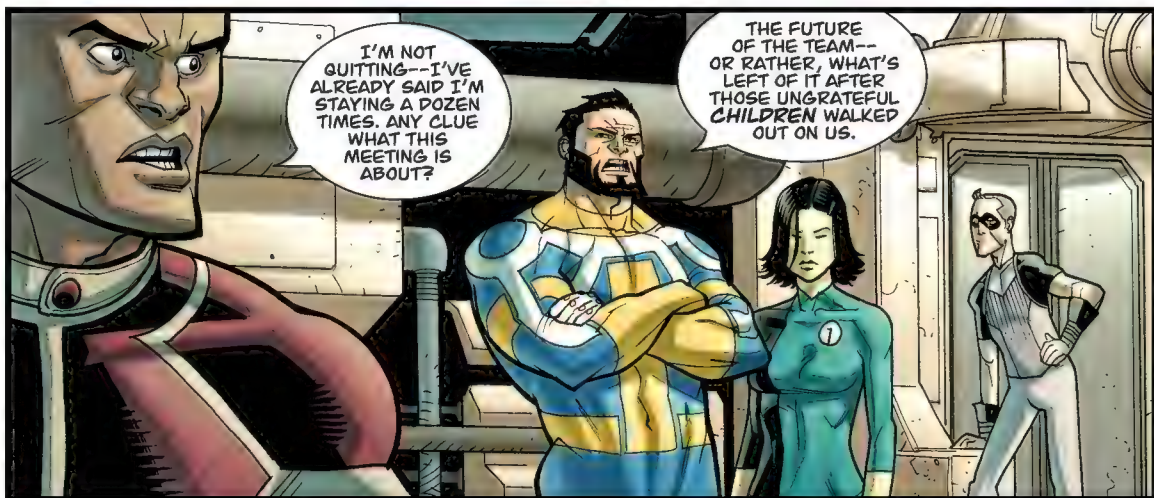
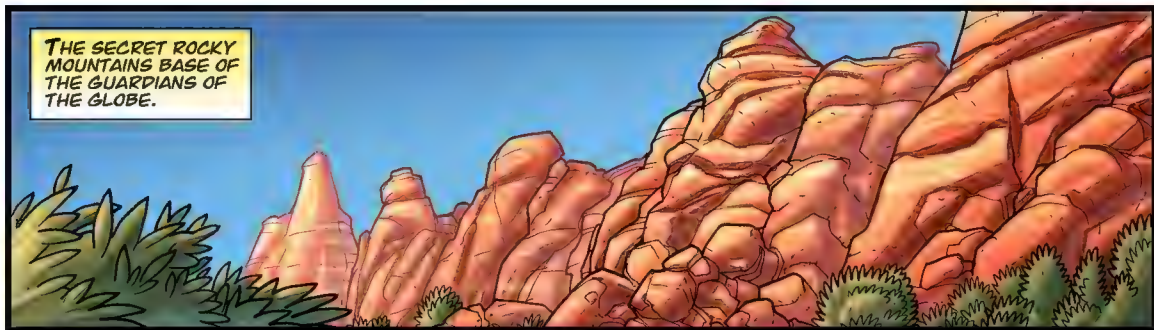








THE SECRET ROCKY MOUNTAINS BASE OF THE GUARDIANS OF THE GLOBE.







LET'S ALL  
TAKE A SECOND  
TO WELCOME  
DARKWING, THE  
NEWEST MEMBER  
OF THE  
GUARDIANS  
OF THE  
GLOBE.

I'M  
HAPPY TO  
SERVE.



IT'S GOOD  
TO HAVE YOU  
ON BOARD,  
KID.



IT'S AN  
HONOR TO  
HAVE THE  
OPPORTUNITY  
TO WORK ALONG-  
SIDE YOU, SIR. I  
ONLY HOPE I CAN  
BE AS USEFUL AS  
MY MENTOR  
WAS, WHEN HE  
WAS ON THIS  
TEAM.



IF YOUR  
PERFORMANCE  
AGAINST DOC  
SEISMIC WAS ANY  
INDICATION--YOU'LL  
SURPASS THE  
ORIGINAL  
DARKWING IN  
NO TIME.



WHO  
IS HE  
AGAIN?

≡SIGH≡



THE SKYSCRAPER  
HEADQUARTERS  
OF TITAN.

THIS IS  
NOT GOING  
TO BE  
EASY.

REGARDLESS, I FEEL  
THE NEED TO REMIND  
YOU THAT THE CLOCK IS  
TICKING. MR. LIU IS A  
HIGH-RANKING AND VERY  
POWERFUL MEMBER OF THE  
ORDER. HIS AGENT MULTI-  
PAUL IS STILL IMPRISONED--  
DESPITE HIS REQUEST  
FOR YOU TO REMEDY  
THAT.

YOUR  
MEMBERSHIP  
IN THE ORDER  
IS NOT SET IN  
STONE--IT WOULD  
NOT TAKE MUCH  
FOR THEM TO  
ASK FOR YOUR  
REMOVAL  
AND--

DO NOT ASSUME  
I'M AS BLIND AS  
MACHINE HEAD  
WAS TO YOUR  
TREACHEROUS  
WAYS.

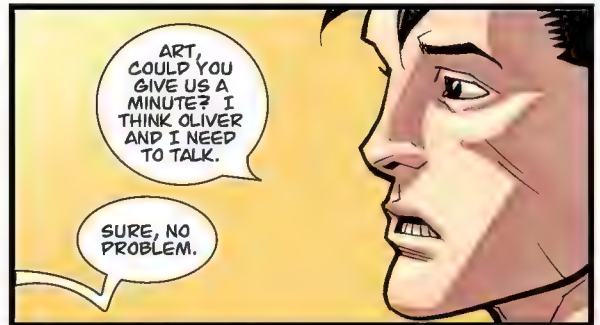
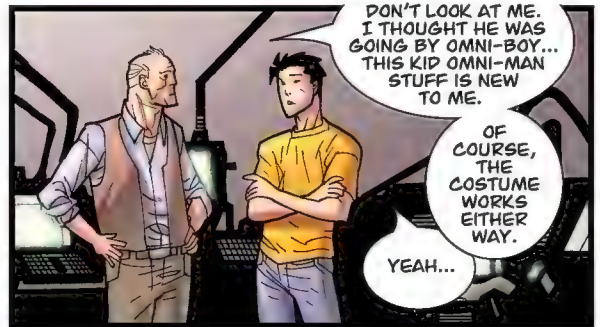
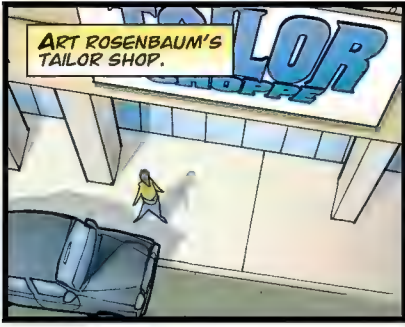
I WON'T  
BE SO EASILY  
OVERTAKEN.

KRROOOOM!!!

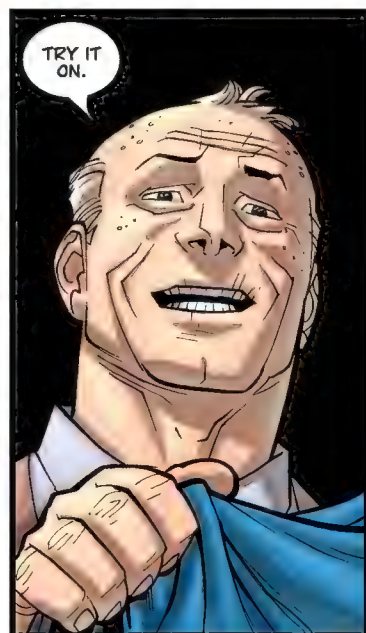
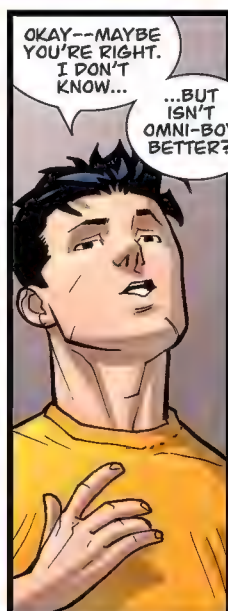
U--  
UNDERSTOOD.

I  
THOUGHT  
SO.

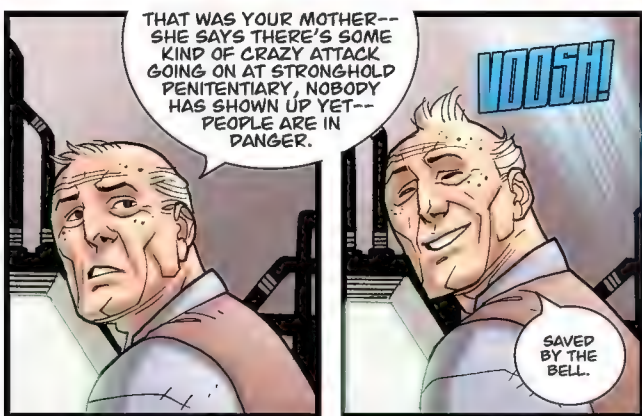
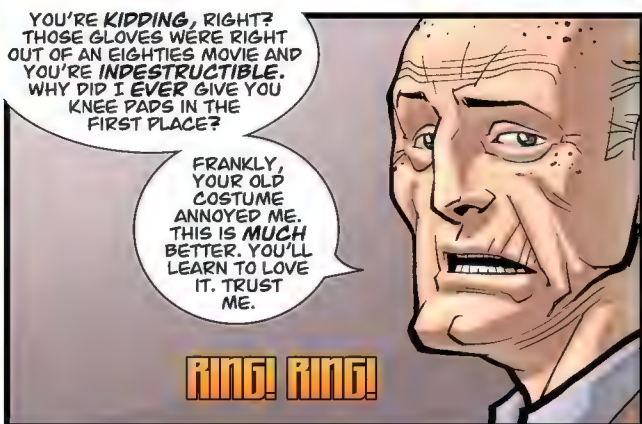












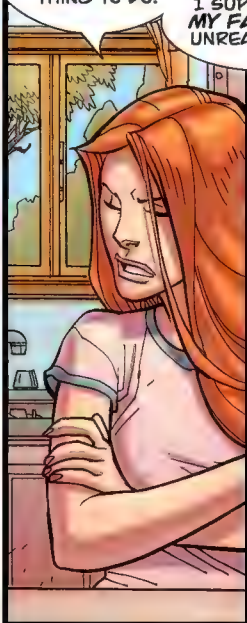




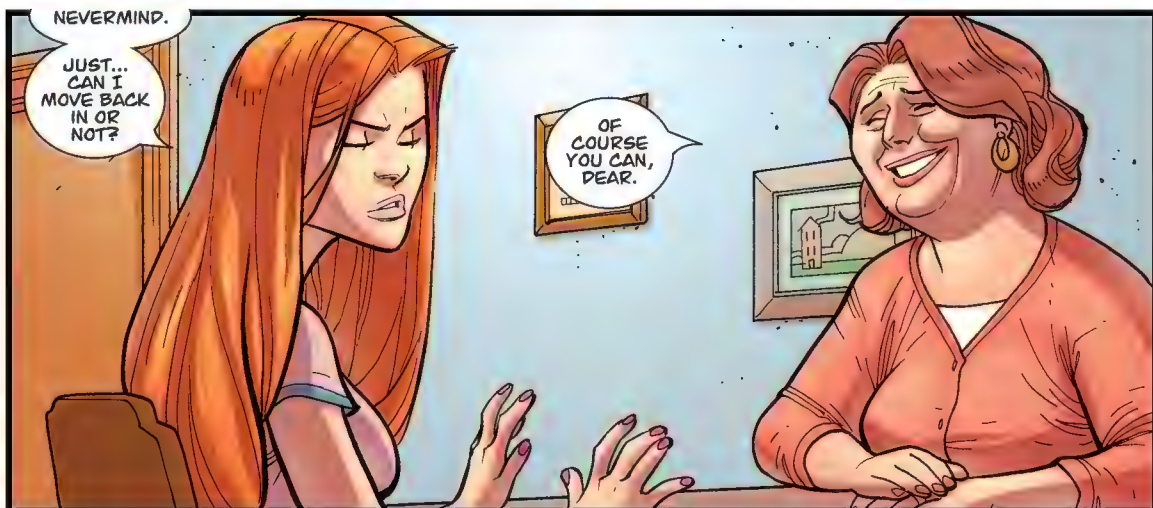
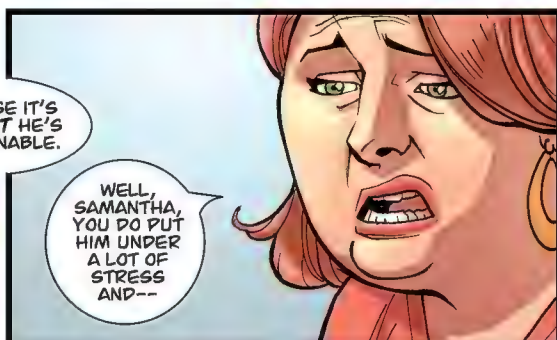
I'M SORRY, DEAR. HE'S JUST STILL MAD OVER THAT NOTE. YOU DID MOVE ALL THE WAY AROUND THE WORLD AND TOLD US IN A NOTE.



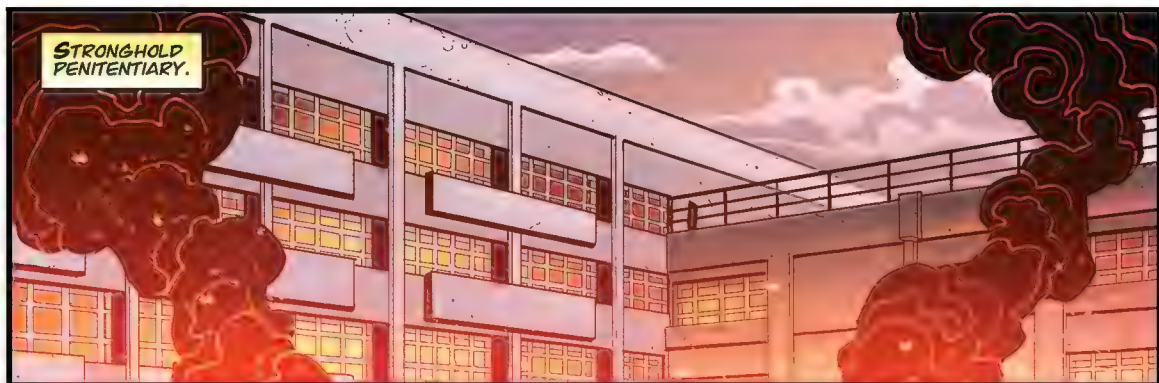
SORRY IF I DIDN'T FEEL LIKE GETTING YELLED AT FOR SOMETHING I KNEW WAS THE RIGHT THING TO DO.



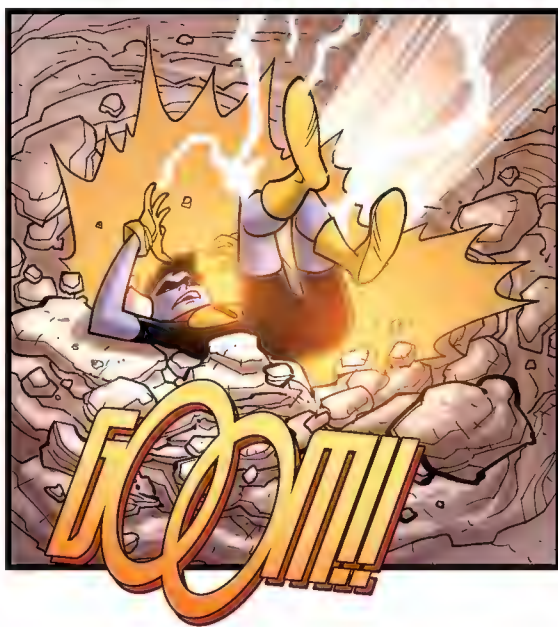
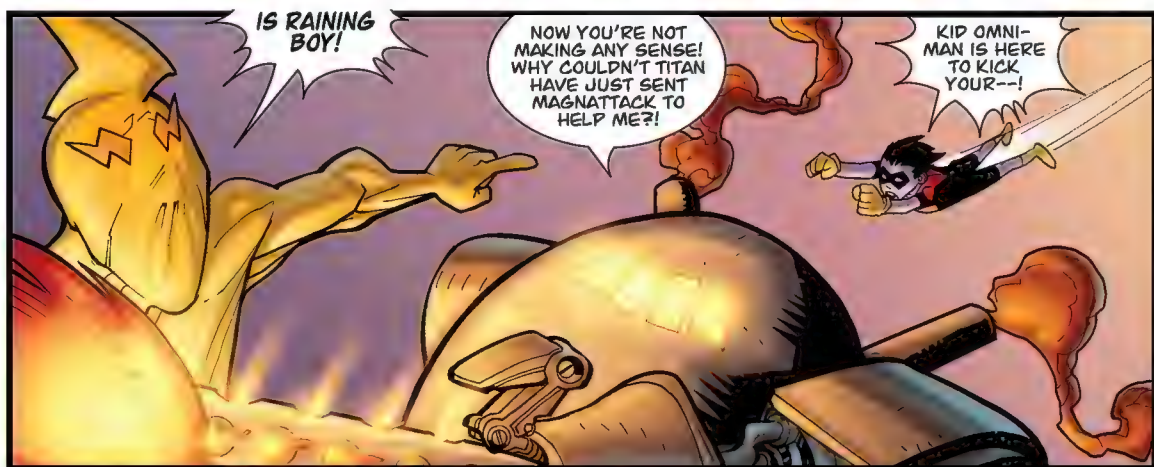
I SUPPOSE IT'S MY FAULT HE'S UNREASONABLE.







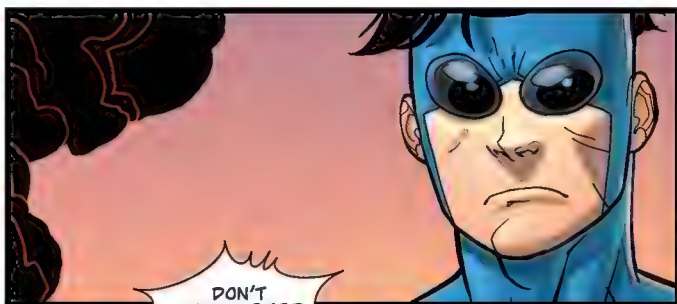
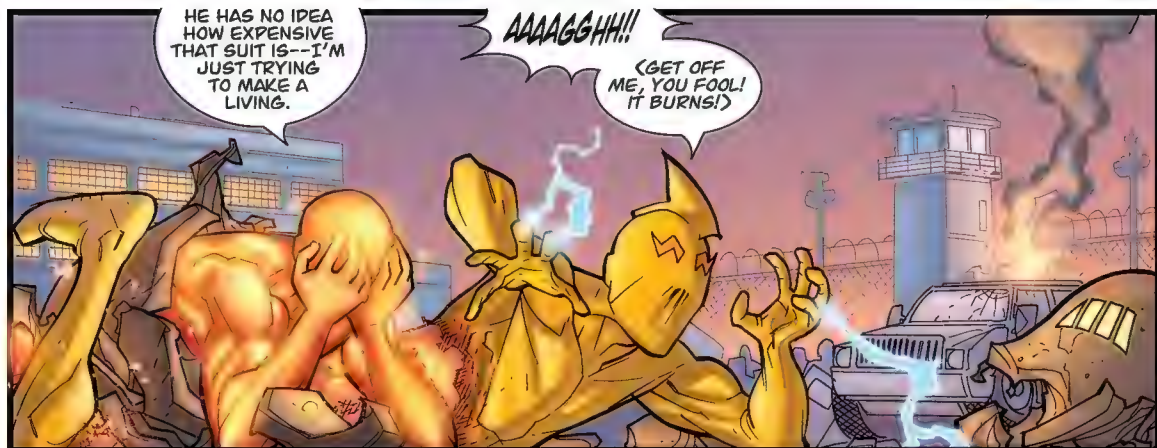




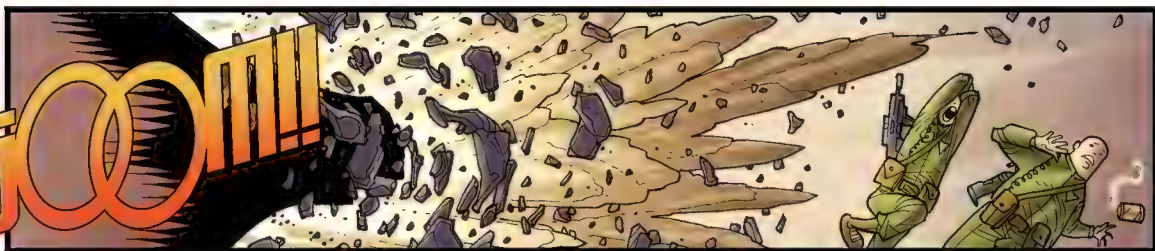
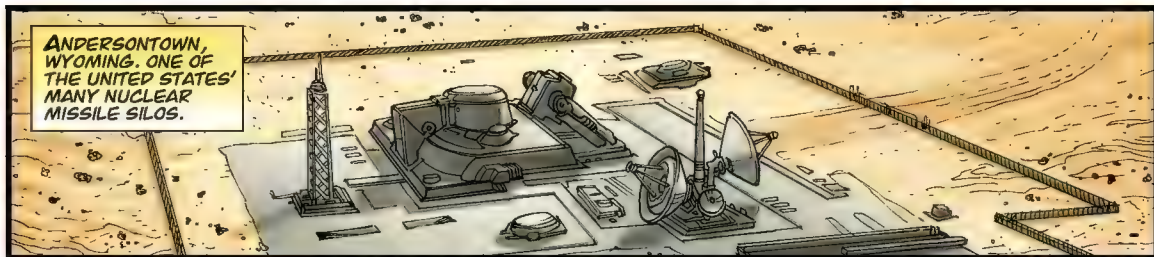








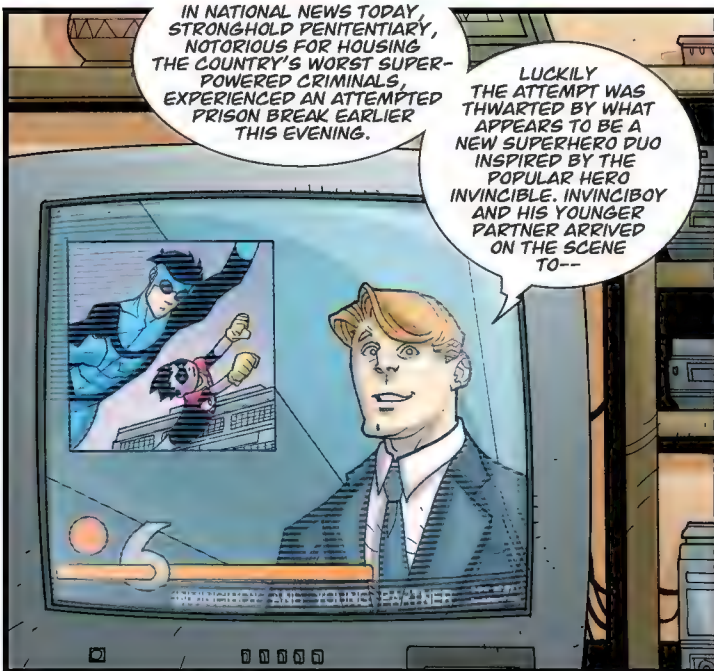
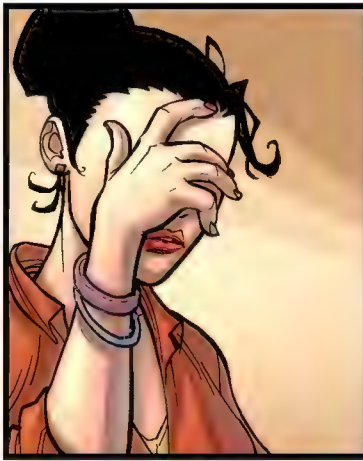
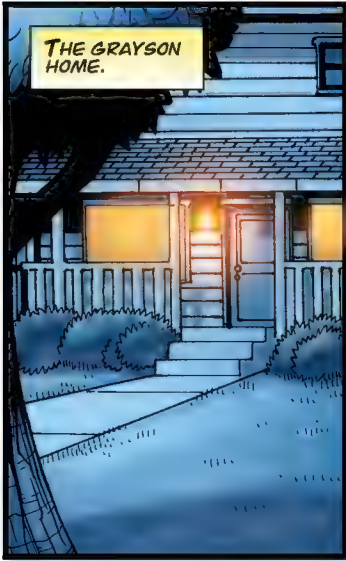




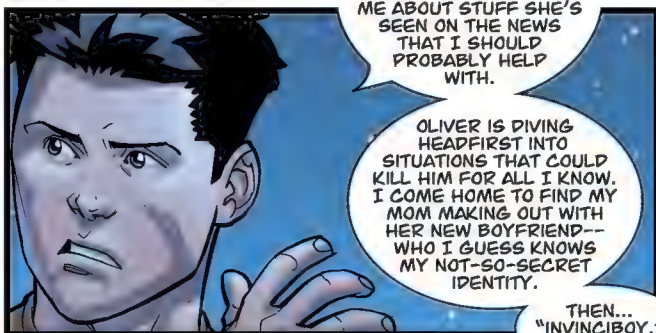
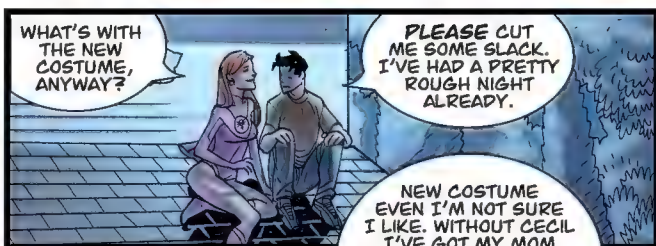




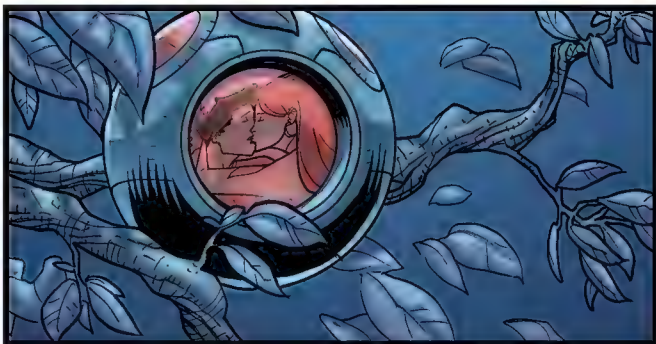
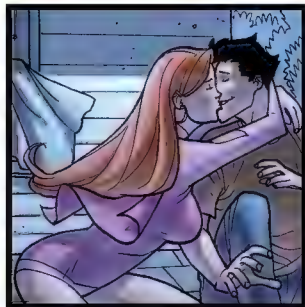








THEN...  
"INVCIBOY."







YOUNG  
LOVE...

...HOW  
INTERESTING.







# CHAPTER 52



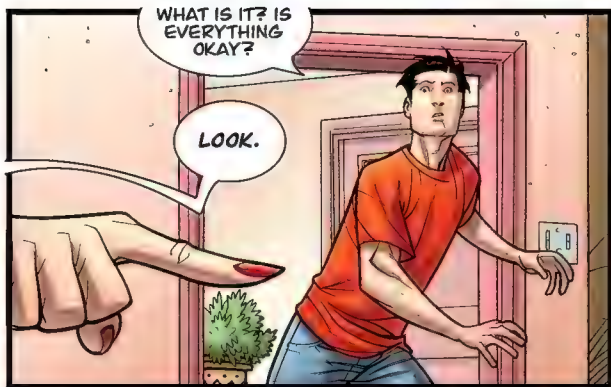


MARK! GET  
DOWN HERE,  
NOW!



WHAT IS IT? IS  
EVERYTHING  
OKAY?

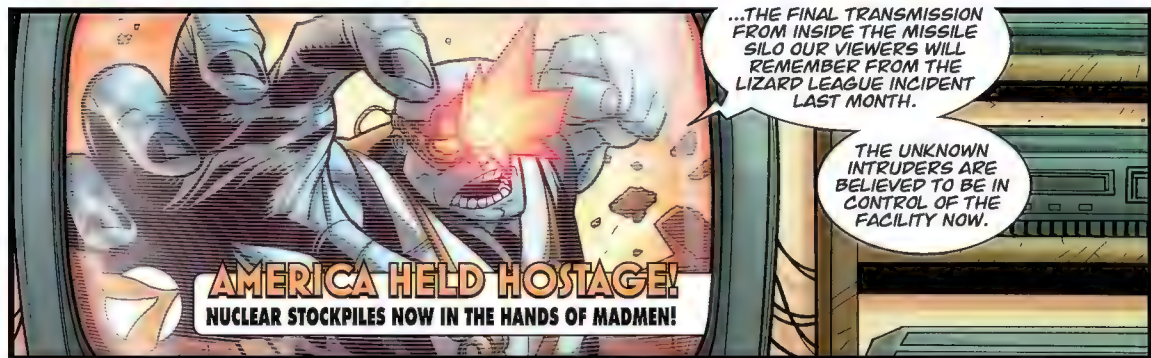
LOOK.



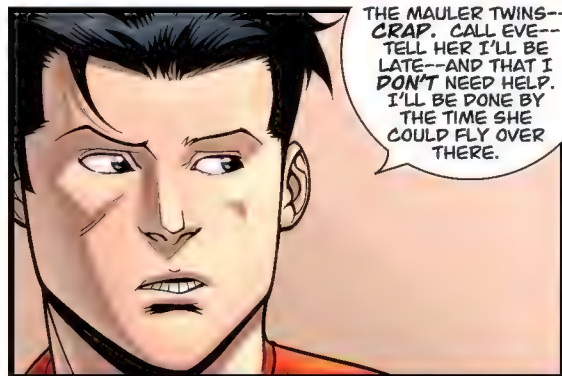
...THE FINAL TRANSMISSION  
FROM INSIDE THE MISSILE  
SILO OUR VIEWERS WILL  
REMEMBER FROM THE  
LIZARD LEAGUE INCIDENT  
LAST MONTH.

THE UNKNOWN  
INTRUDERS ARE  
BELIEVED TO BE IN  
CONTROL OF THE  
FACILITY NOW.

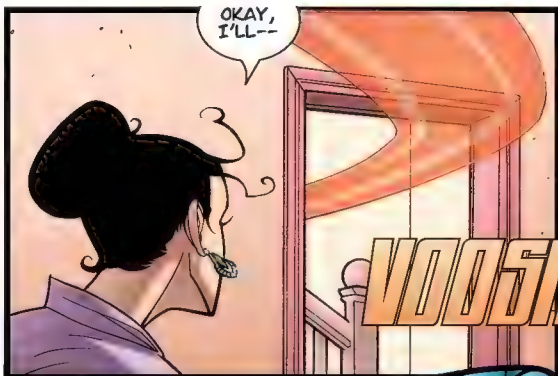
**AMERICA HELD HOSTAGE!**  
NUCLEAR STOCKPILES NOW IN THE HANDS OF MADMEN!



THE MAULER TWINS--  
CRAP. CALL EVE--  
TELL HER I'LL BE  
LATE--AND THAT I  
DON'T NEED HELP.  
I'LL BE DONE BY  
THE TIME SHE  
COULD FLY OVER  
THERE.



OKAY,  
I'LL--



**VOOSH!**







I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT WORKED---

OF COURSE IT WORKED. WE BUILT THAT GUN. I TOLD YOU IT WOULD WORK.

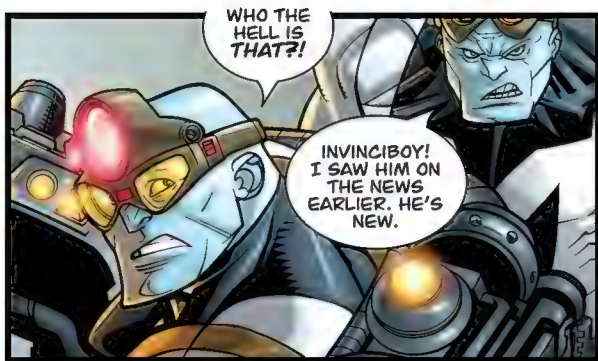
SO WELL. YOU CUT ME OFF. I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT WORKED SO WELL.

I TOLD YOU IT WOULD WORK THAT WELL.

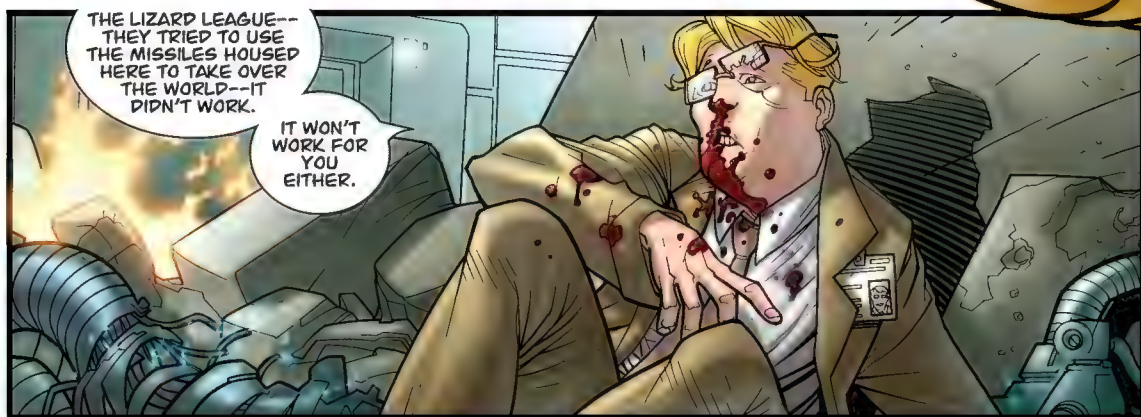
I THINK I'M THE ORIGINAL CLONE. YOU'RE OBVIOUSLY SUFFERING FROM EXTENSIVE DEGRADATION.

WON'T WORK. WHATEVER YOU'RE TRYING... SOMEONE WILL STOP YOU. SOMEONE---









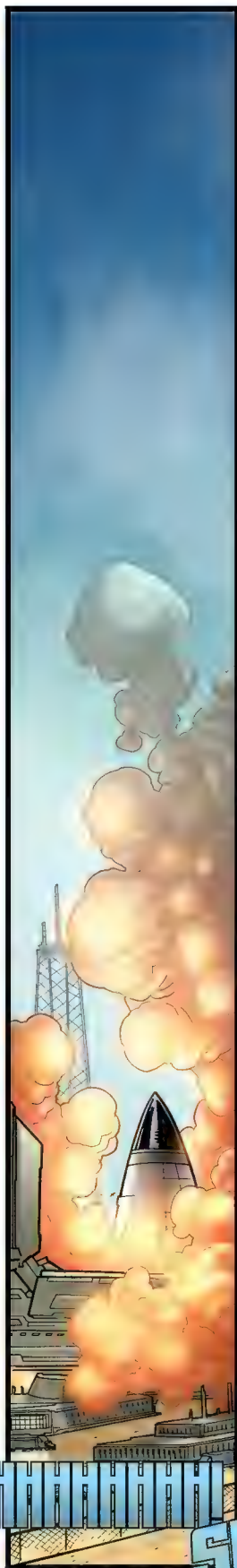




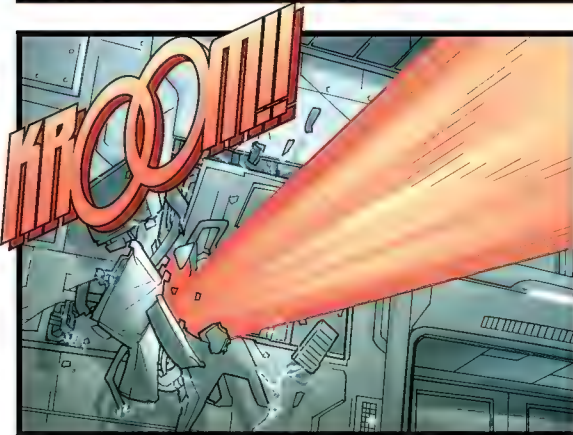
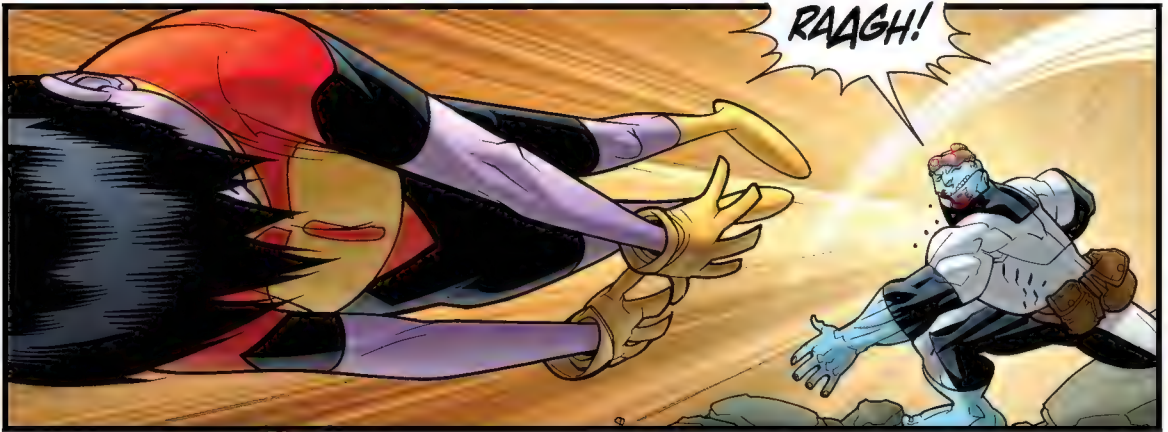








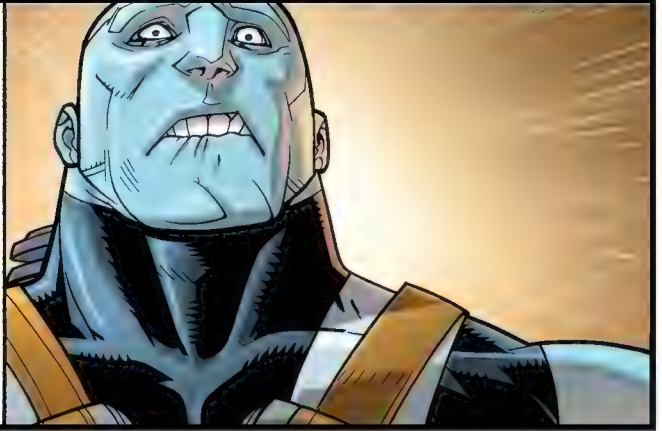




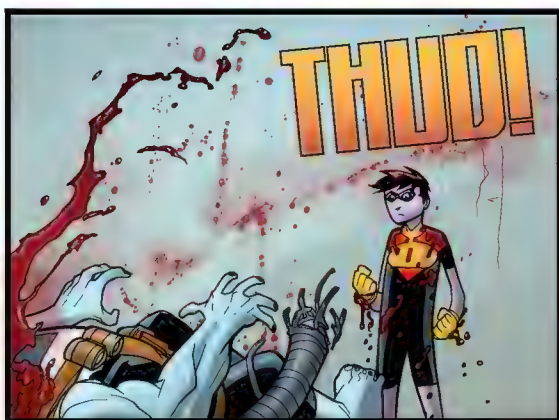




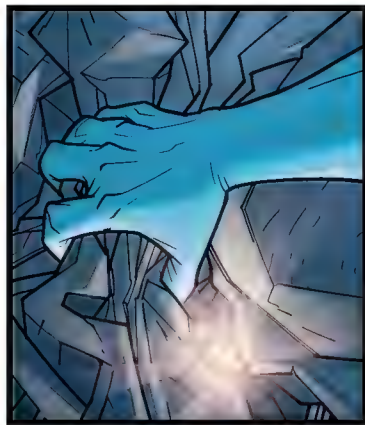
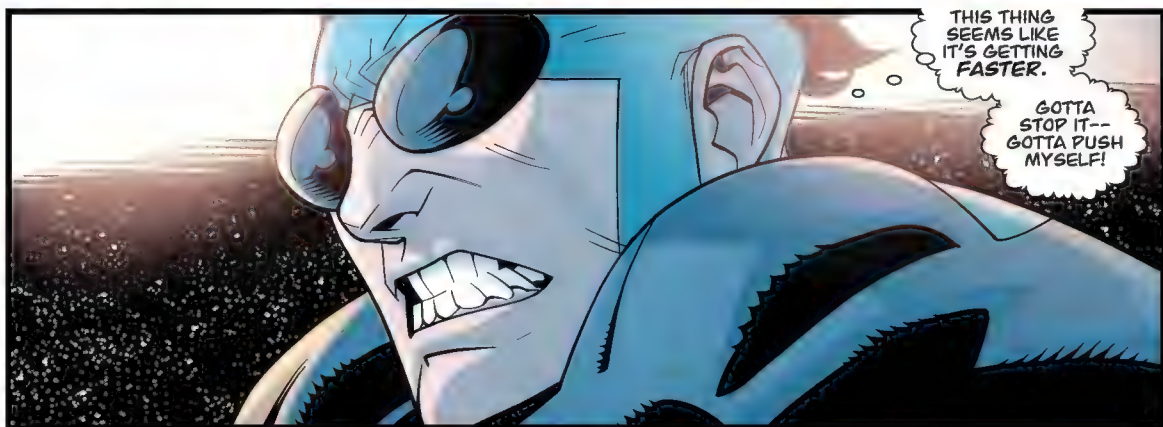
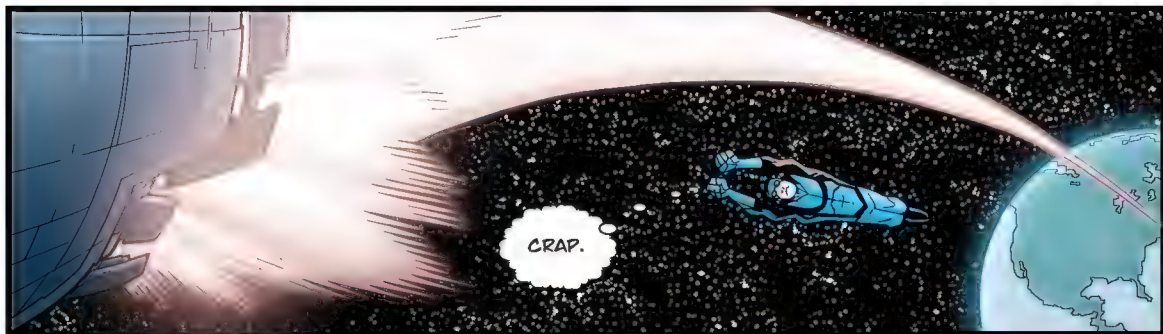












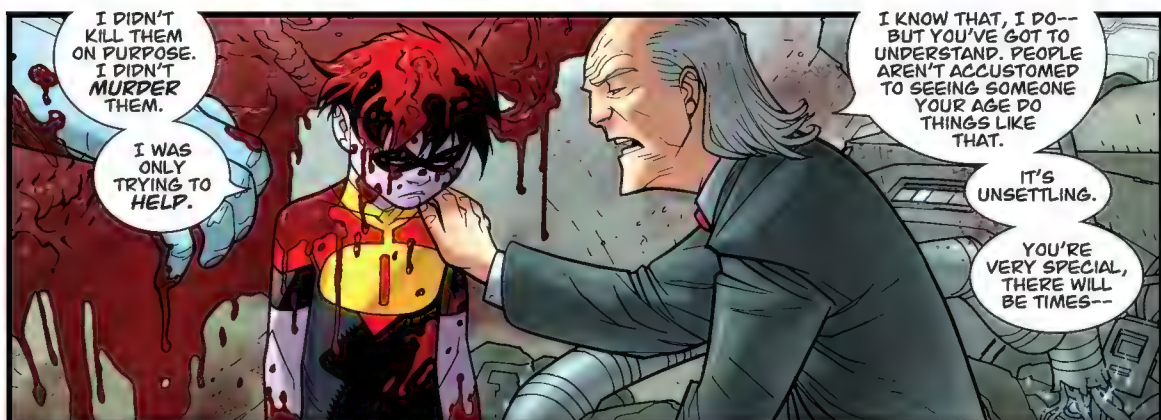
















I TOLD YOU--I WARNED YOU. STAY OUT OF MY LIFE--LEAVE ME AND MY FAMILY ALONE!

WHY ARE YOU HERE?!

INVINCIBLE, CALM DOWN. I'M TRYING TO HELP YOU... I'M JUST HERE TO CLEAN UP YOUR BROTHER'S MESS.















PRECIOUS. HUMAN  
LIFE ISN'T PRECIOUS.  
NOT IN GENERAL--  
NOT EVERYONE.

PEOPLE RISK  
THEIR LIVES EVERY  
DAY. THEY KILL EACH  
OTHER. IF THEY DON'T  
THINK THEIR LIVES  
ARE IMPORTANT, WHY  
SHOULD I?

MOST OF  
THEM ARE UTTERLY  
INSIGNIFICANT.

YOU  
SOUND  
LIKE  
DAD.

SO? WHY IS THAT BAD?  
WAS HE SO WRONG? DID  
NOTHING HE SAID MAKE  
SENSE TO YOU--EVEN  
ON A SMALL  
LEVEL?

HAVE YOU  
EVER THOUGHT  
THAT MAYBE OUR  
FATHER WAS  
RIGHT?



...



SOMETIMES.



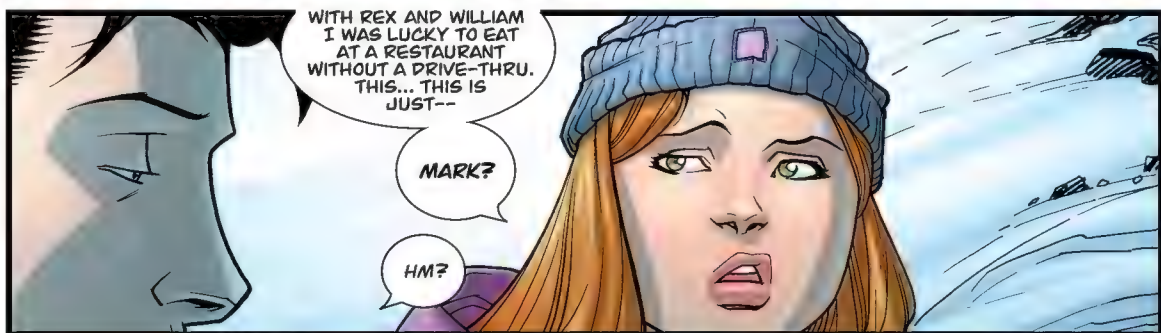
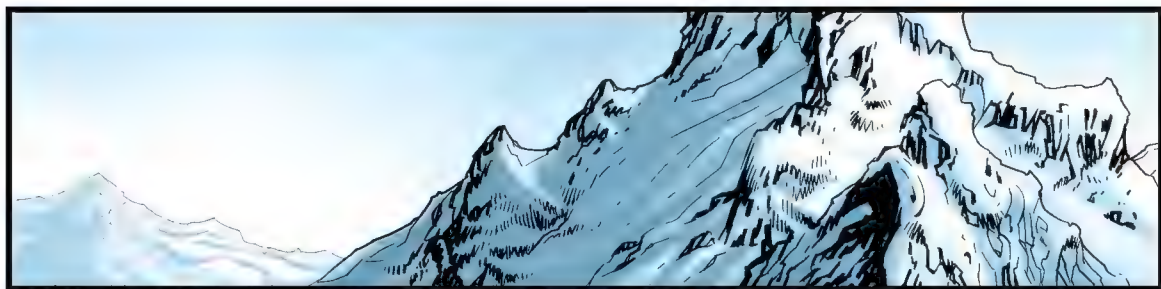




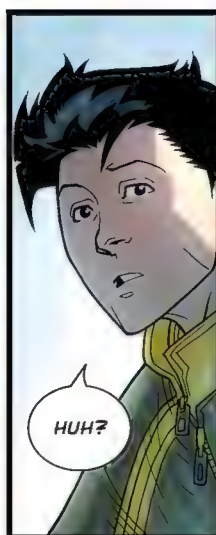
# CHAPTER 53













WHAT? NO. I CAN'T DO THAT. THIS IS SUPPOSED TO BE SPECIAL. I HATE THAT I'VE RUINED THE MOMENT AS MUCH AS I HAVE ALREADY.

NO WAY.



WHOA--I'M NOT SOME STUPID GIRL YOU HAVE TO BEND OVER BACKWARDS FOR TO KEEP HAPPY. I'M ATOM FRICKIN' EVE-- I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE GOING THROUGH.

LET'S GO.

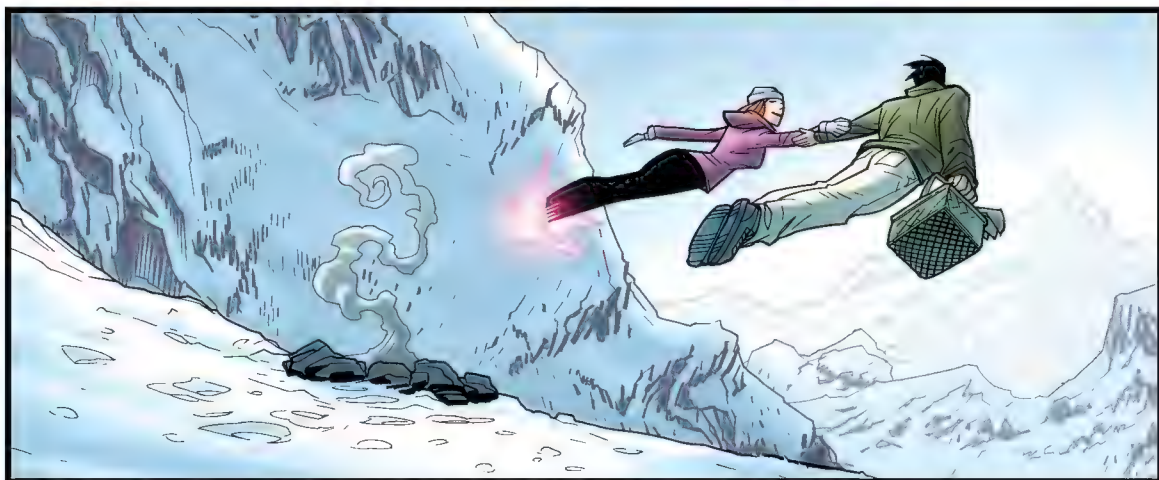
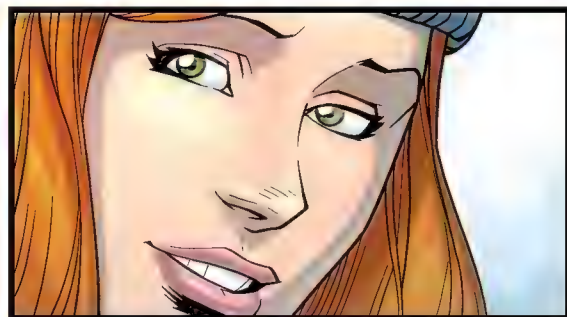
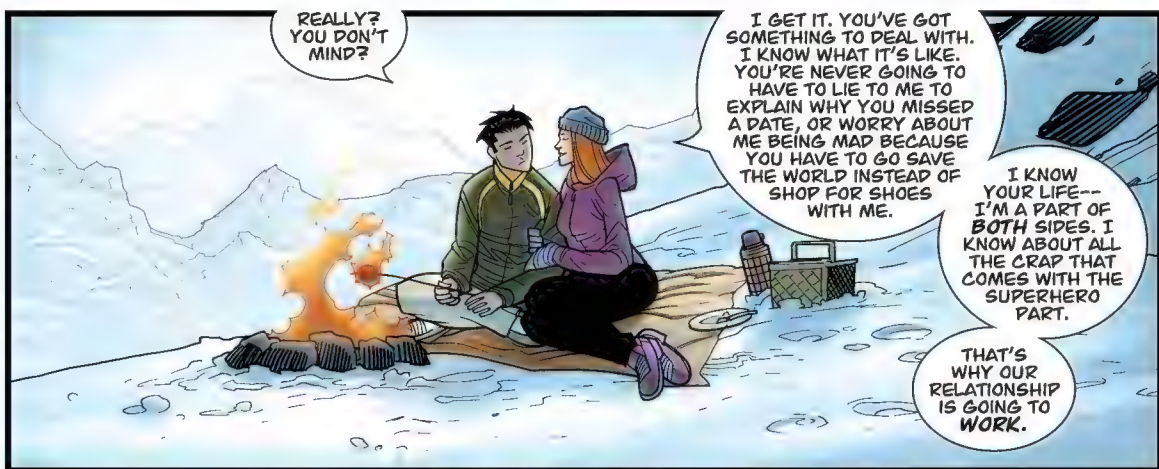


REALLY? YOU DON'T MIND?

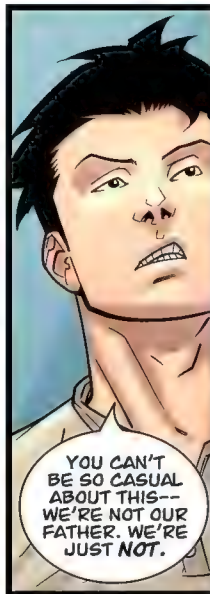
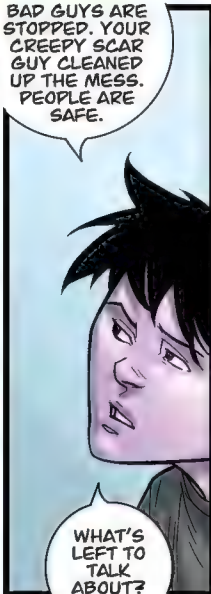
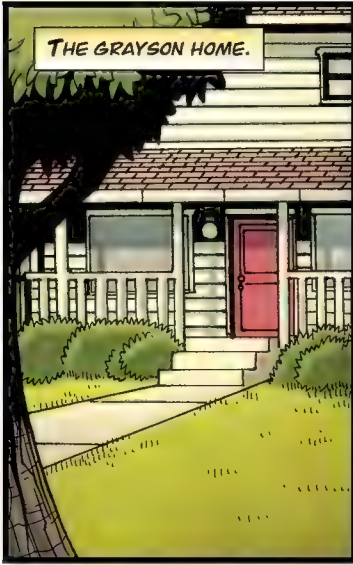
I GET IT. YOU'VE GOT SOMETHING TO DEAL WITH. I KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE. YOU'RE NEVER GOING TO HAVE TO LIE TO ME TO EXPLAIN WHY YOU MISSED A DATE, OR WORRY ABOUT ME BEING MAD BECAUSE YOU HAVE TO GO SAVE THE WORLD INSTEAD OF SHOP FOR SHOES WITH ME.

I KNOW YOUR LIFE-- I'M A PART OF BOTH SIDES. I KNOW ABOUT ALL THE CRAP THAT COMES WITH THE SUPERHERO PART.

THAT'S WHY OUR RELATIONSHIP IS GOING TO WORK.









I'M NOT FROM THIS PLANET, MARK. I'M NOT EVEN PARTIALLY HUMAN. I DON'T RELATE TO THESE PEOPLE, I DON'T UNDERSTAND THESE PEOPLE AND IN ALL BUT A FEW CASES I DON'T LIKE THESE PEOPLE.

WHERE I COME FROM, THE GREATER GOOD AND SOCIETY AS A WHOLE ARE VASTLY MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE INDIVIDUAL. MY PEOPLE LIVED SUCH A SHORT TIME--LIFE WAS MEANT TO IMPROVE LIFE FOR OTHERS.

EVERYONE HERE IS SO SELFISH AND SELF-CENTERED. IT'S DISGUSTING.

YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS. YOU'VE LIVED HERE MUCH LONGER THAN YOU EVER LIVED WITH YOUR MOTHER'S PEOPLE.

YOU WERE JUST A BABY--

YOU KNOW I HAVE COMPLETE RECOLLECTION OF EVERYTHING I'VE EXPERIENCED IN MY LIFE. I CAN REMEMBER CONVERSATIONS HELD DURING MY BIRTH.

I CAN--

STOP IT-- JUST STOP IT!

YOU'RE A CHILD--YOU'RE JUST A KID! YOU DON'T KNOW ANYTHING. YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU THINK--WHAT YOU FEEL! YOU'RE TOO YOUNG TO BE TALKING LIKE THIS!

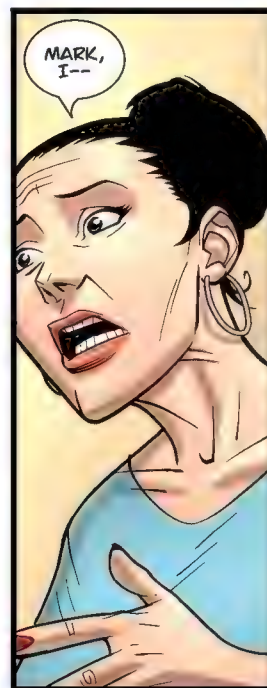
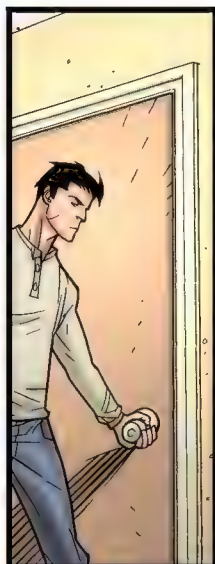
YOUR MIND ISN'T MADE UP ON THESE PEOPLE--ALMOST EVERYTHING YOU KNOW IS FROM READING BOOKS AND WATCHING TV. THAT'S RIDICULOUS. YOU DON'T KNOW ANYTHING!

MARK, I RESPECTFULLY DISAGREE. I'VE HAD THE UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO--

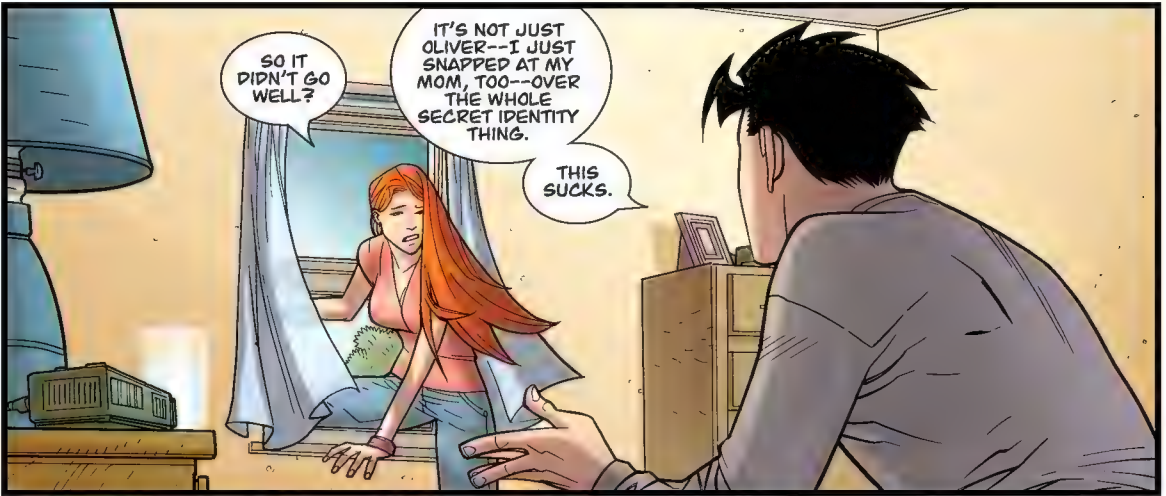
NO, JUST-- STOP. STOP.

WE'LL CONTINUE THIS LATER.

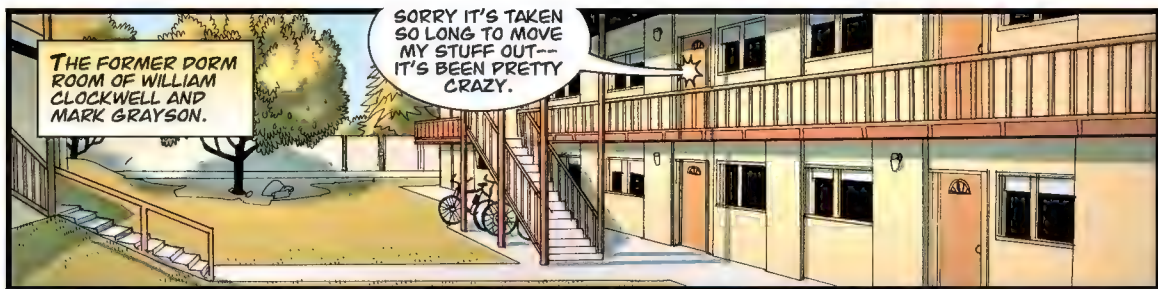




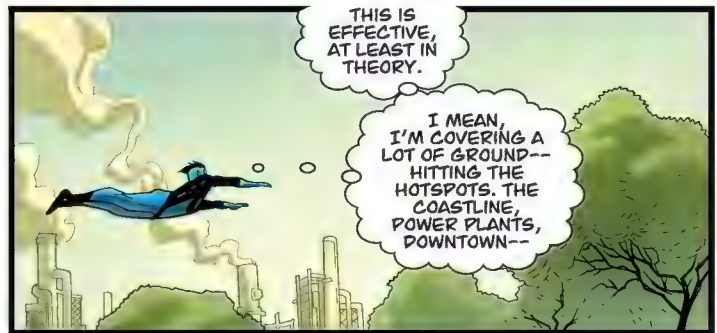








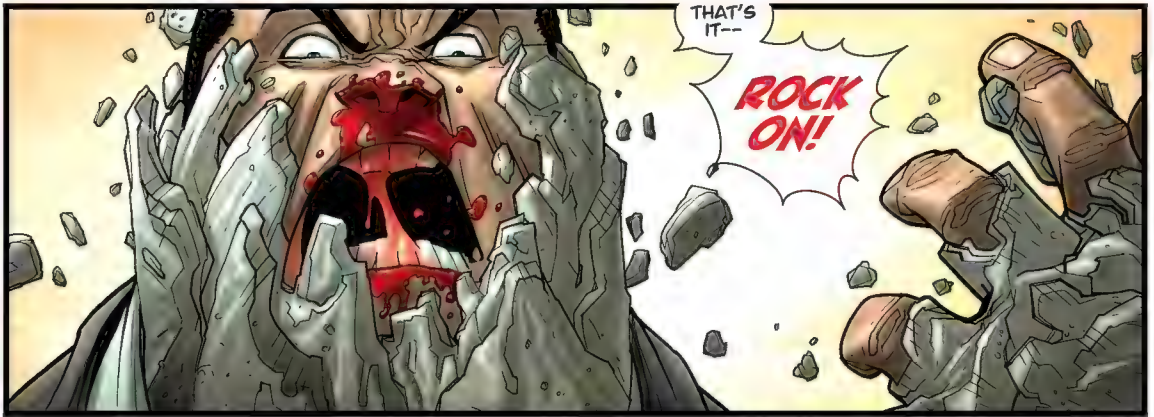
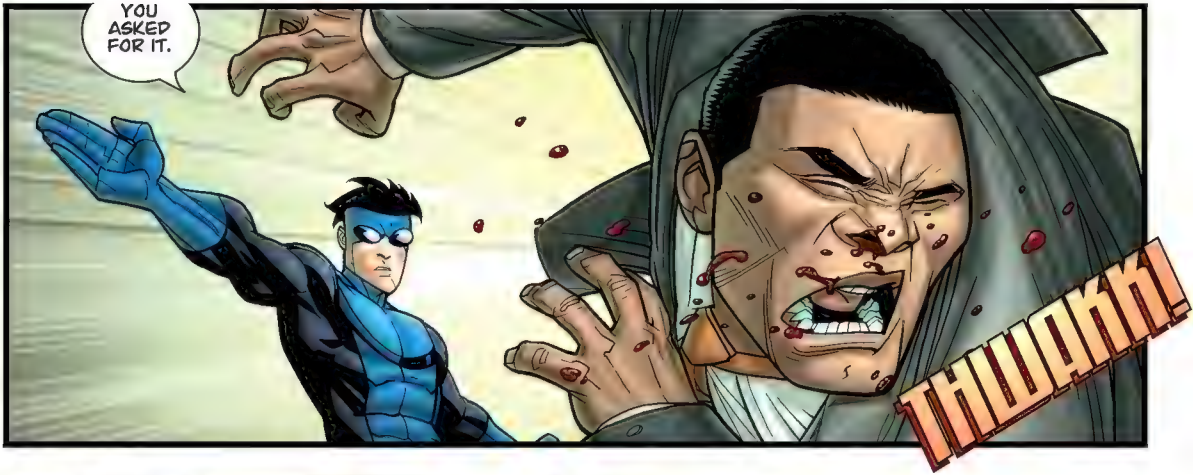














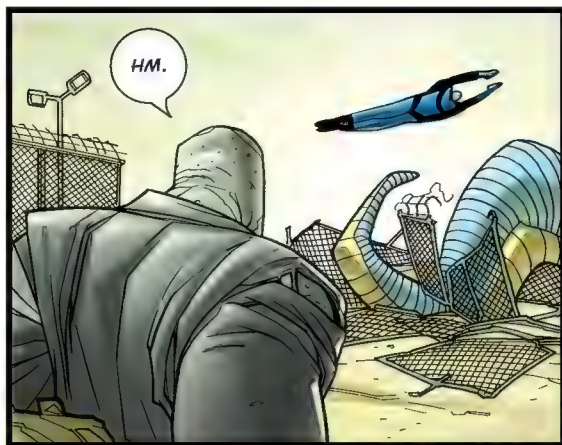
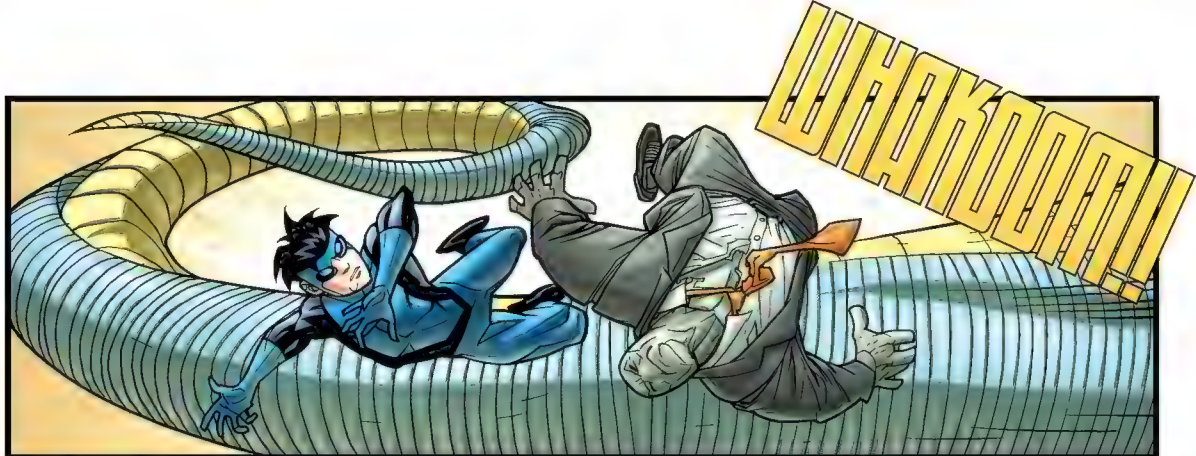
**TITAN!**

I'VE  
WAITED  
LONG  
ENOUGH--  
YOUR TIME  
IS UP!

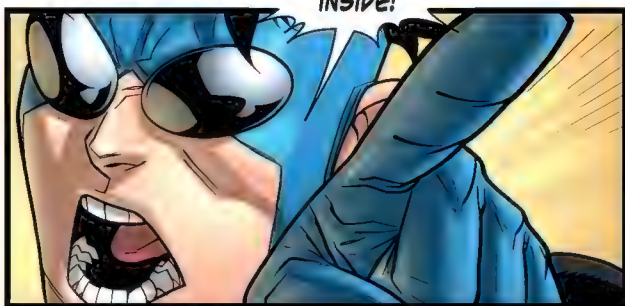
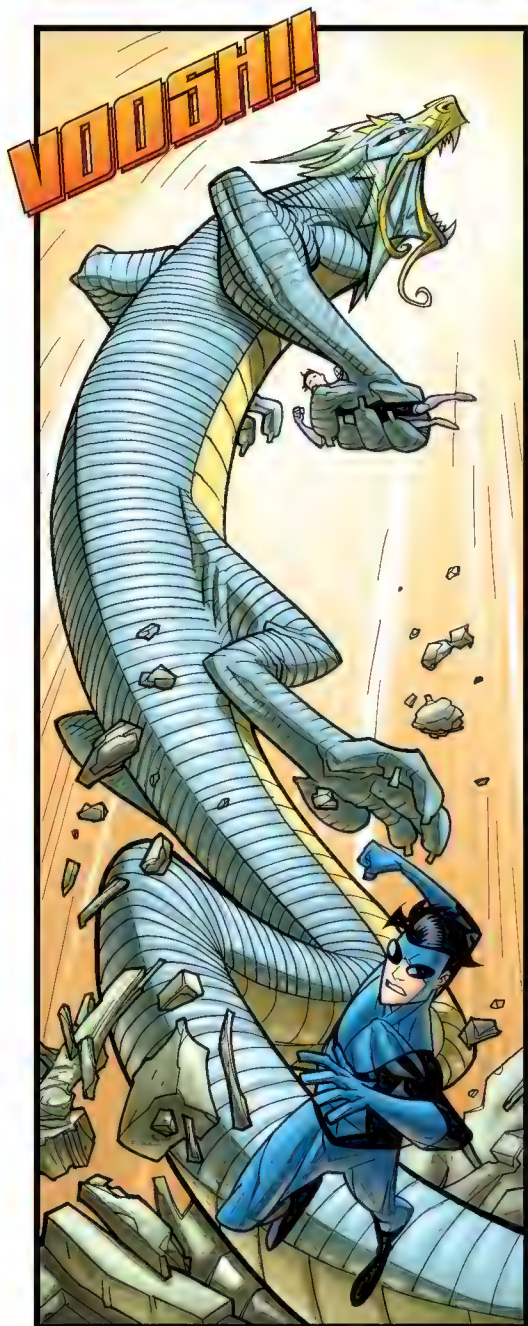


**WROKKK-DOOM!**

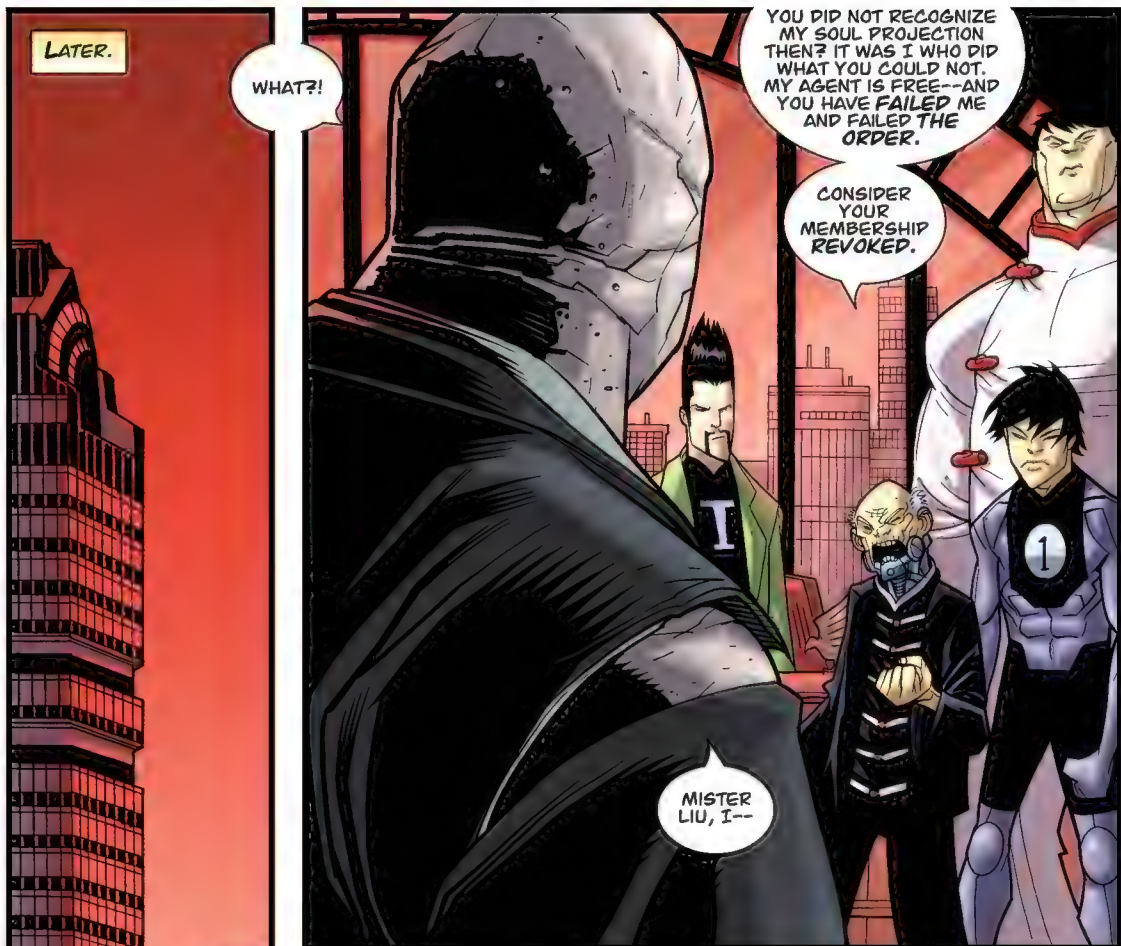












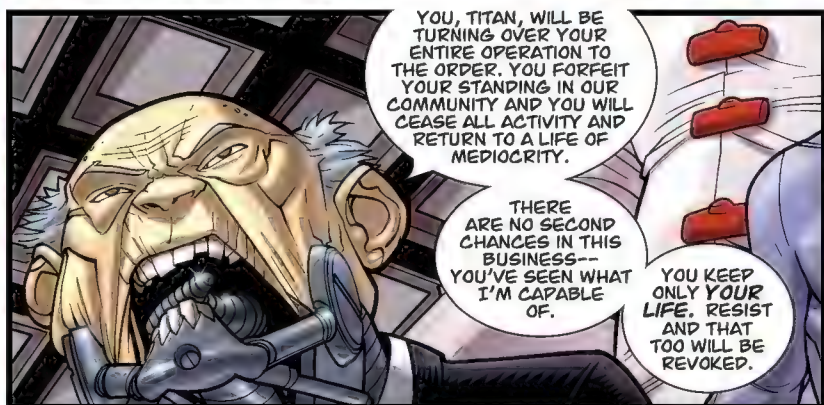
LATER.

WHAT?!

YOU DID NOT RECOGNIZE MY SOUL PROJECTION THEN? IT WAS I WHO DID WHAT YOU COULD NOT. MY AGENT IS FREE--AND YOU HAVE FAILED ME AND FAILED THE ORDER.

CONSIDER YOUR MEMBERSHIP REVOKED.

MISTER LIU, I--



YOU, TITAN, WILL BE TURNING OVER YOUR ENTIRE OPERATION TO THE ORDER. YOU FORFEIT YOUR STANDING IN OUR COMMUNITY AND YOU WILL CEASE ALL ACTIVITY AND RETURN TO A LIFE OF MEOCURITY.

THERE ARE NO SECOND CHANCES IN THIS BUSINESS-- YOU'VE SEEN WHAT I'M CAPABLE OF.

YOU KEEP ONLY YOUR LIFE. RESIST AND THAT TOO WILL BE REVOKED.



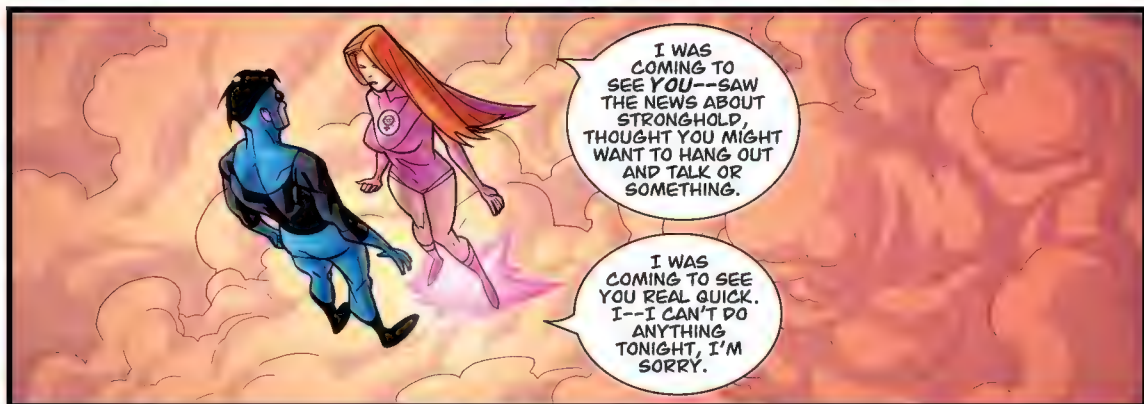
ISOTOPE, PROVE YOUR LOYALTY OR LACK THEREOF.

RIGHT NOW.

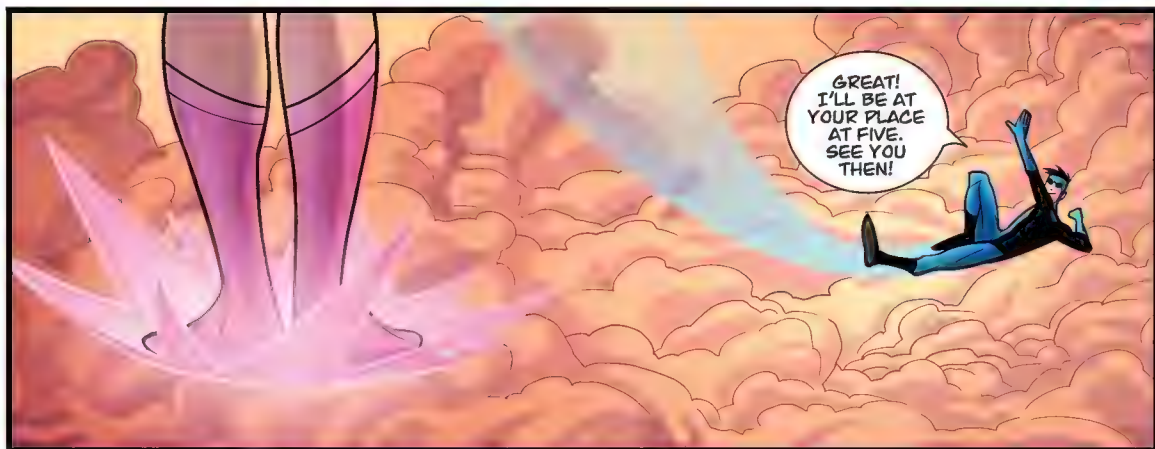
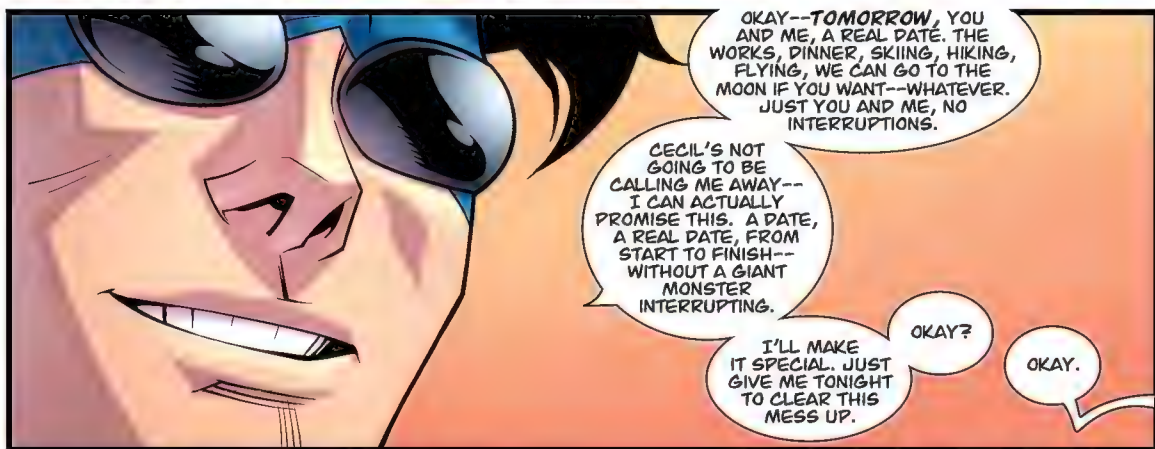
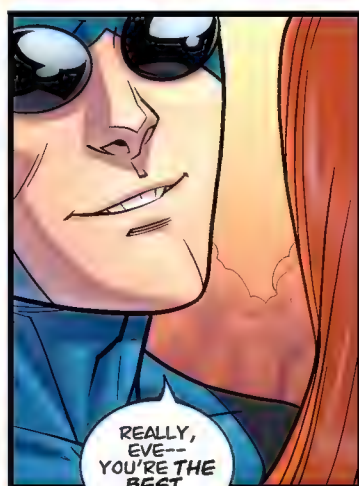
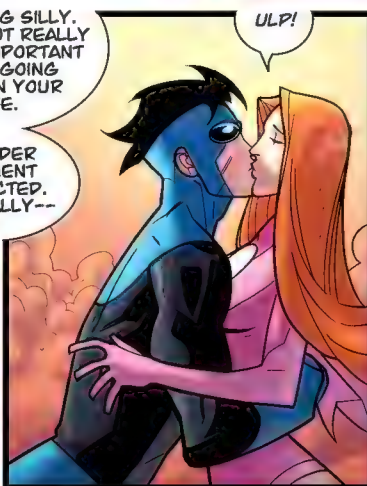
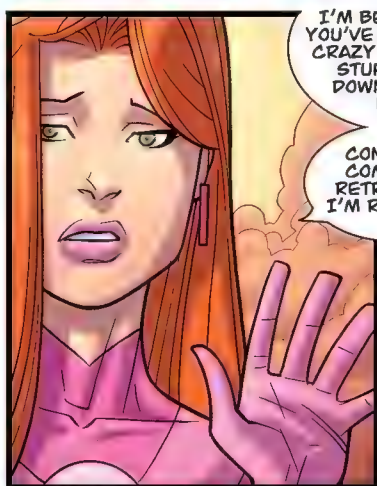




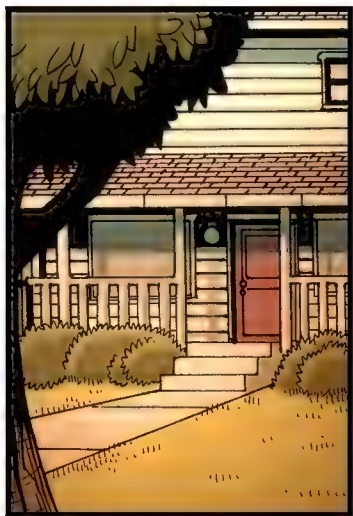












NOPE. HOW HIGH WERE YOU?



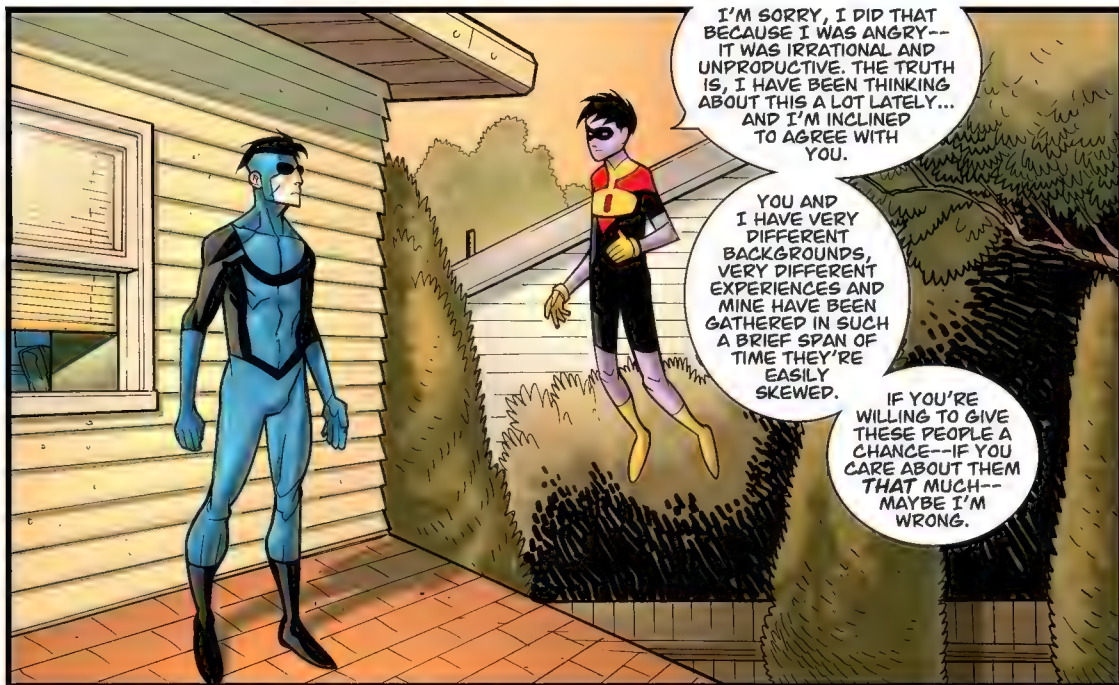
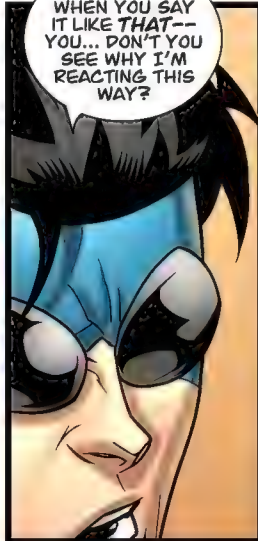
GIVE IT TIME, I WAS KIND OF FORCED INTO IT, THIS ALIEN WAS ON HIS WAY AND DAD CALLED AND--



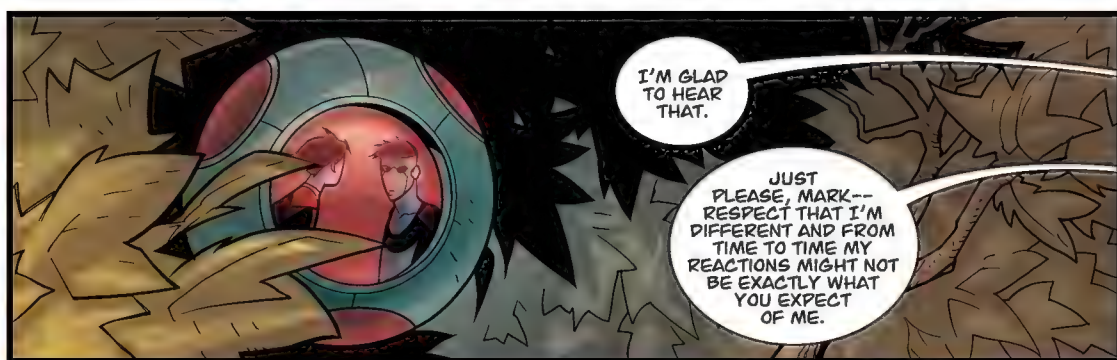
I DIDN'T GO ANYWHERE. I KNOW I'M "GROUNDED" UNTIL YOU GET OVER ME BEING EFFICIENT.



WHEN YOU SAY IT LIKE THAT-- YOU... DON'T YOU SEE WHY I'M REACTING THIS WAY?









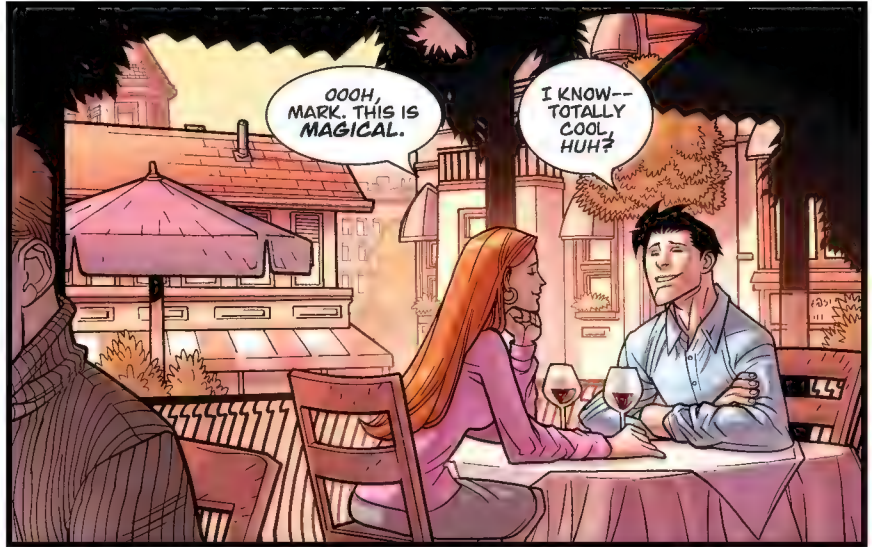
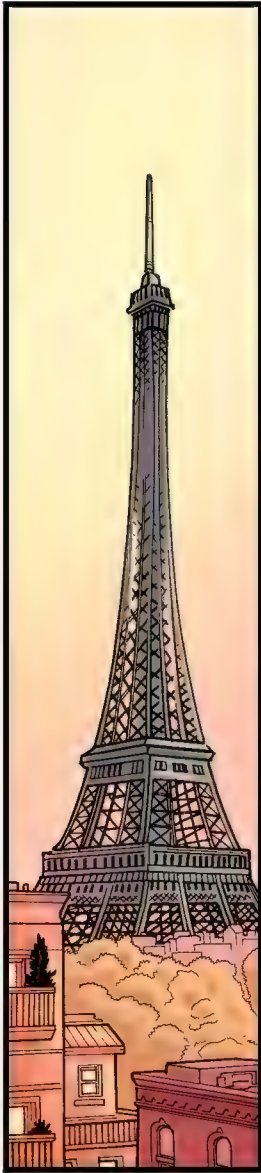




# CHAPTER 54







OOOH, MARK. THIS IS MAGICAL.

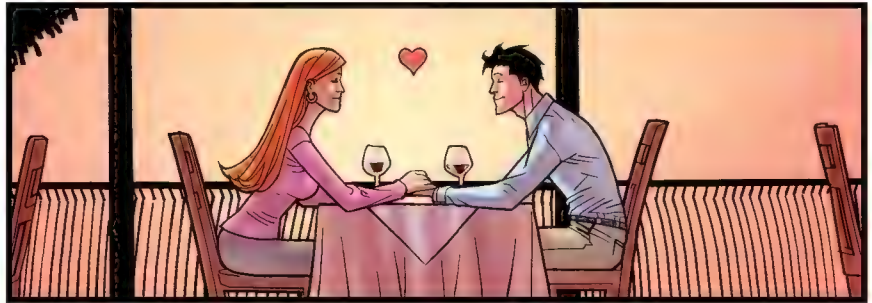
I KNOW-- TOTALLY COOL, HUH?



AND I'VE GOT YOU ALL TO MYSELF--NO INTERRUPTIONS...



JUST LIKE I PROMISED, I'M OFFICIALLY OFF DUTY.



PLEASE TELL ME THAT ISN'T A GLOWING PORTAL OPENING UP NEXT TO OUR TABLE.

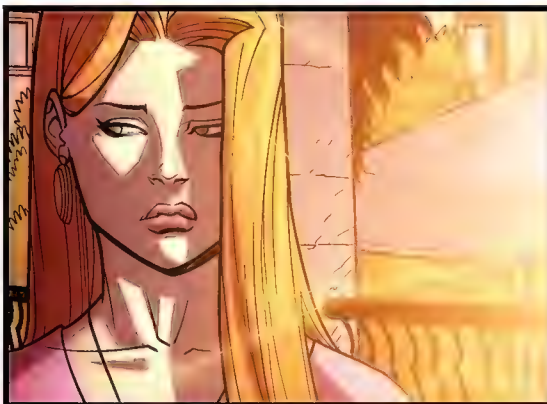
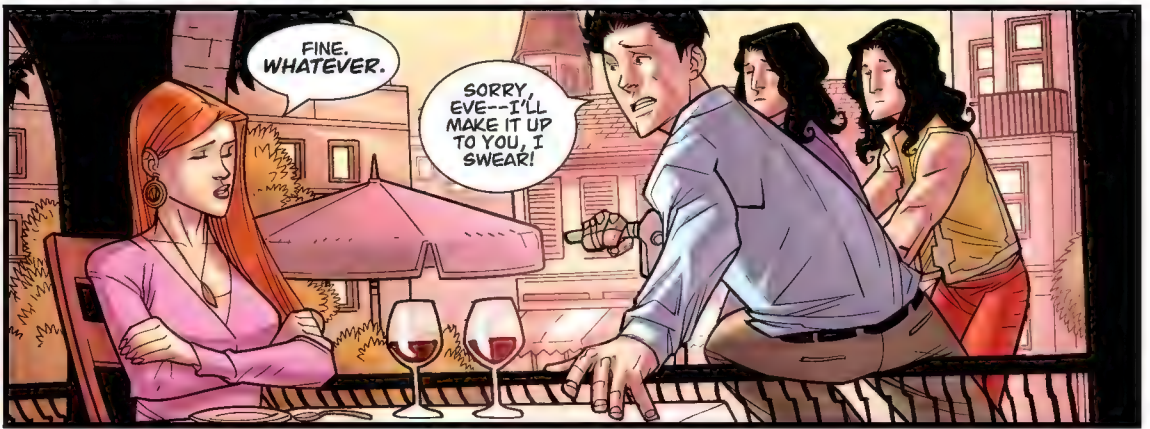


YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW MUCH I WISH I COULD SAY THAT...













WELCOME  
TO...

...THE  
FUTURE!



OR AS WE  
CALL IT--THE  
PRESENT!

OUR FUTURE  
IS WAY WORSE  
THAN THIS ONE,  
TRUST ME. WHICH  
IS WHY WE REALLY  
NEED YOUR  
HELP!



SO--TELL ME WHAT  
IT IS YOU NEED ME TO  
DO. I REALLY NEED  
TO GET BACK TO MY  
DATE--AND PLEASE  
DON'T TELL MY  
GIRLFRIEND I WORE  
MY COSTUME UNDER  
MY CLOTHES.

DO YOU HAVE  
A COMPARTMENT  
ON THIS SLED I  
COULD PUT  
THESE IN?



I'LL TAKE  
THOSE  
OFF YOUR  
HANDS.

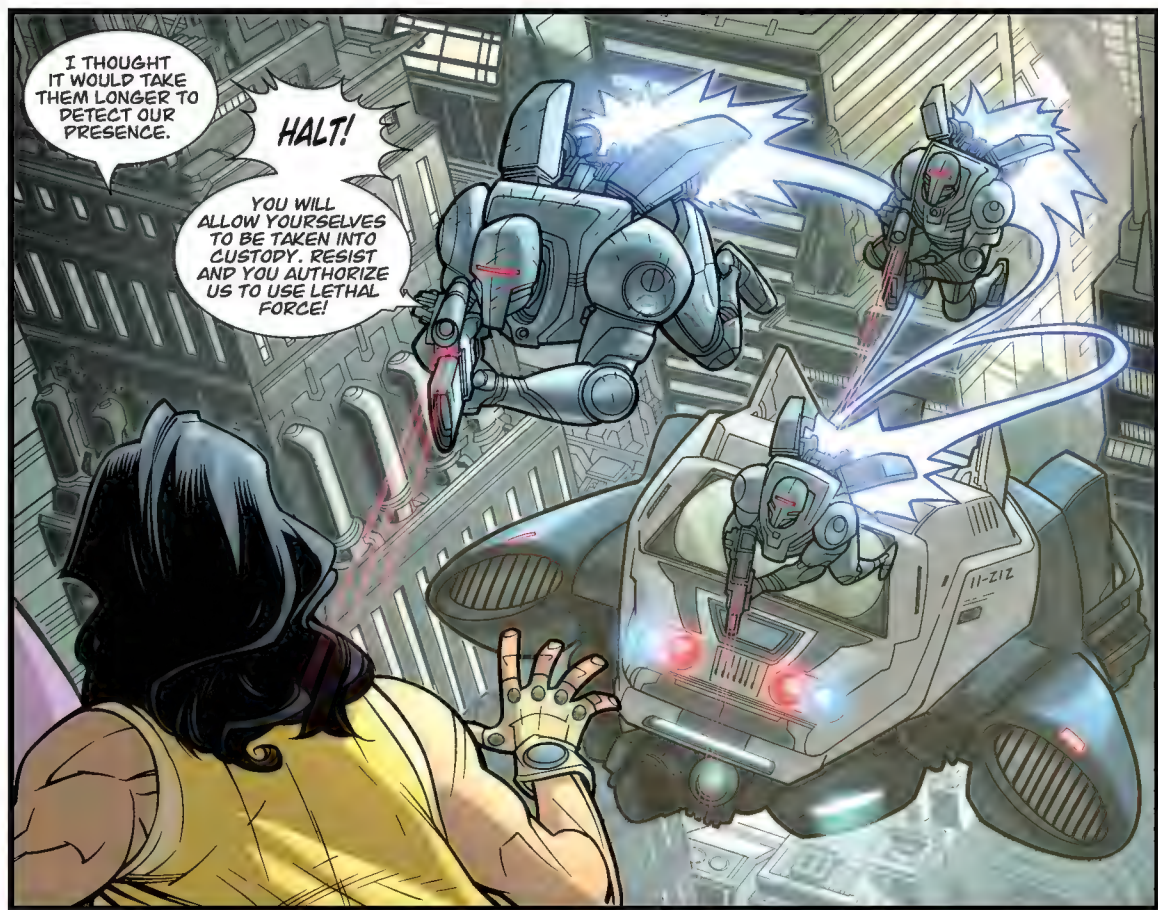
HUH?



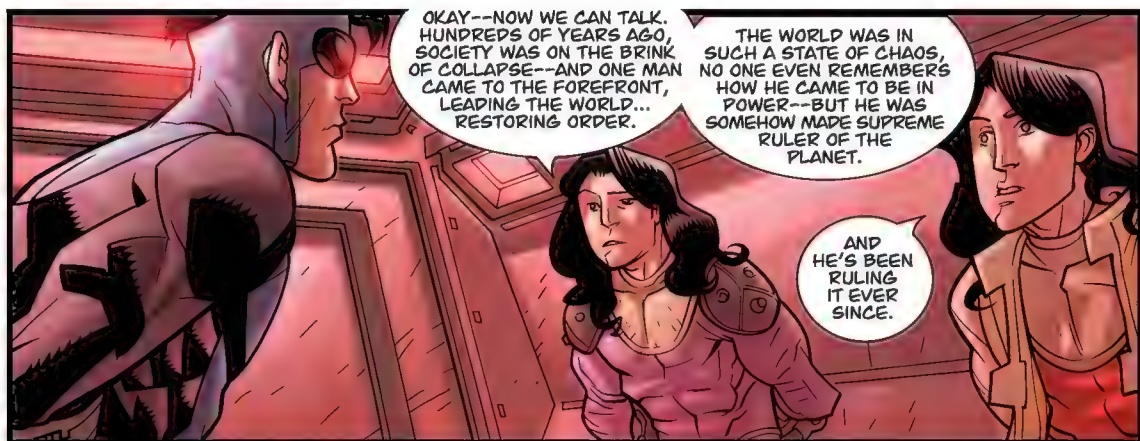
WHAT  
WAS--?

PROBABLY  
BEST IF WE  
IGNORE THAT.









OKAY--NOW WE CAN TALK. HUNDREDS OF YEARS AGO, SOCIETY WAS ON THE BRINK OF COLLAPSE--AND ONE MAN CAME TO THE FOREFRONT, LEADING THE WORLD... RESTORING ORDER.

THE WORLD WAS IN SUCH A STATE OF CHAOS, NO ONE EVEN REMEMBERS HOW HE CAME TO BE IN POWER--BUT HE WAS SOMEHOW MADE SUPREME RULER OF THE PLANET.

AND HE'S BEEN RULING IT EVER SINCE.



FOR HUNDREDS OF YEARS?

IS HE A... VILTRUMITE?



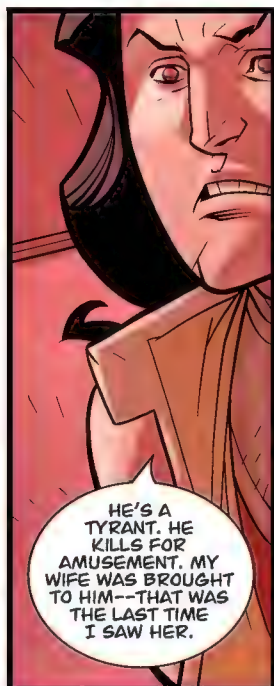
WE DON'T KNOW WHAT THAT IS.

ANYWAY, HE'S LOST HIS MIND, HE'S DESTROYING THE PLANET, PEOPLE ARE DYING--AND THINGS ARE ONLY GETTING WORSE.



RIGHT--AND WE WERE ASSEMBLING PIECES OF A WEAPON THAT COULD SUPPOSEDLY DEFEAT HIM. THE INK FROM YOUR DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE WAS USED TO MAKE A POISON HE WOULDN'T BE IMMUNE TO.

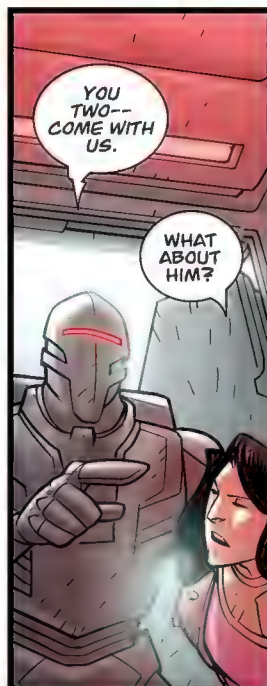
IT DIDN'T WORK.



HE'S A TYRANT. HE KILLS FOR AMUSEMENT. MY WIFE WAS BROUGHT TO HIM--THAT WAS THE LAST TIME I SAW HER.

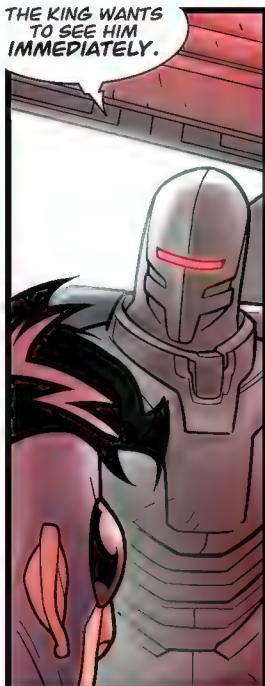


WE'RE BEING BROUGHT TO THE CITADEL, BUT WE'LL BE HELD IN THE DETENTION LEVEL-- YOU'LL NEED TO WORK YOUR WAY UP TO THE ROYAL CHAMBERS. WE'VE GOT REBELS WORKING WITH US EVERYWHERE. ONCE WE FIGURE OUT HOW TO GET YOU TO THE KING-- WE CAN--



YOU TWO-- COME WITH US.

WHAT ABOUT HIM?



THE KING WANTS TO SEE HIM IMMEDIATELY.







NO, I'M FINE--  
I'M JUST YOUNGER.  
THESE GUYS  
BROUGHT ME HERE  
FROM THE--

I HAVEN'T  
SEEN YOU SINCE  
YOU TOOK YOUR  
FAMILY AND LEFT  
THIS PLANET. WHAT  
WAS THAT--TWO  
HUNDRED--THREE  
HUNDRED YEARS  
AGO?

I JUST...  
I CAN'T  
REMEMBER.

I CARRY WITHIN ME  
A GREAT SORROW,  
MARK. SOMETHING  
I CAN'T OVERCOME...  
NOT ANYMORE...

IS IT ABOUT  
KATE? DID  
KATE DIE?

KATE?  
I DON'T  
REMEMBER  
A KATE...

IS THAT  
THE REDHEAD  
THAT YOU--

**NO!**  
I DON'T  
REMEMBER! I  
DON'T REMEMBER  
ANYTHING!

I WANT  
IT ALL TO END...  
FINALLY, AT  
LONG LAST... I  
JUST WANT IT  
TO BE OVER.

I WANT  
TO DIE,  
MARK.

UH...  
I'M SORRY,  
I REALLY  
DON'T KNOW  
WHAT TO  
SAY.

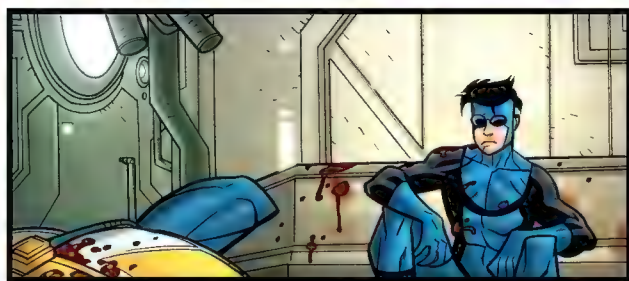
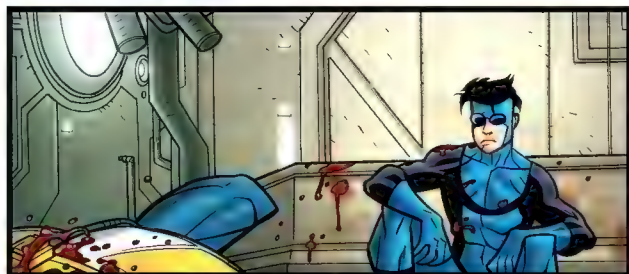
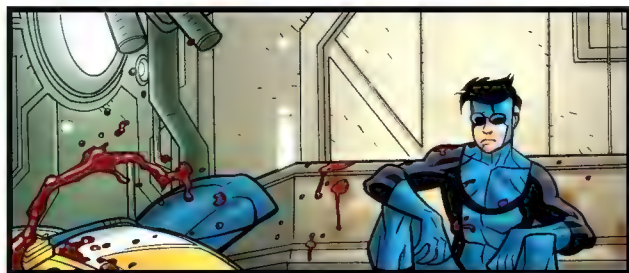












WE WERE ABLE TO CONTACT THE RESISTANCE FROM OUR HOLDING CELL. THE ROYAL GUARD HAS FALLEN--WE'VE TAKEN OVER THE CITADEL, IT'S ALL OVER!

WE CAN TAKE YOU BACK TO YOUR TIME WHENEVER YOU'RE READY.

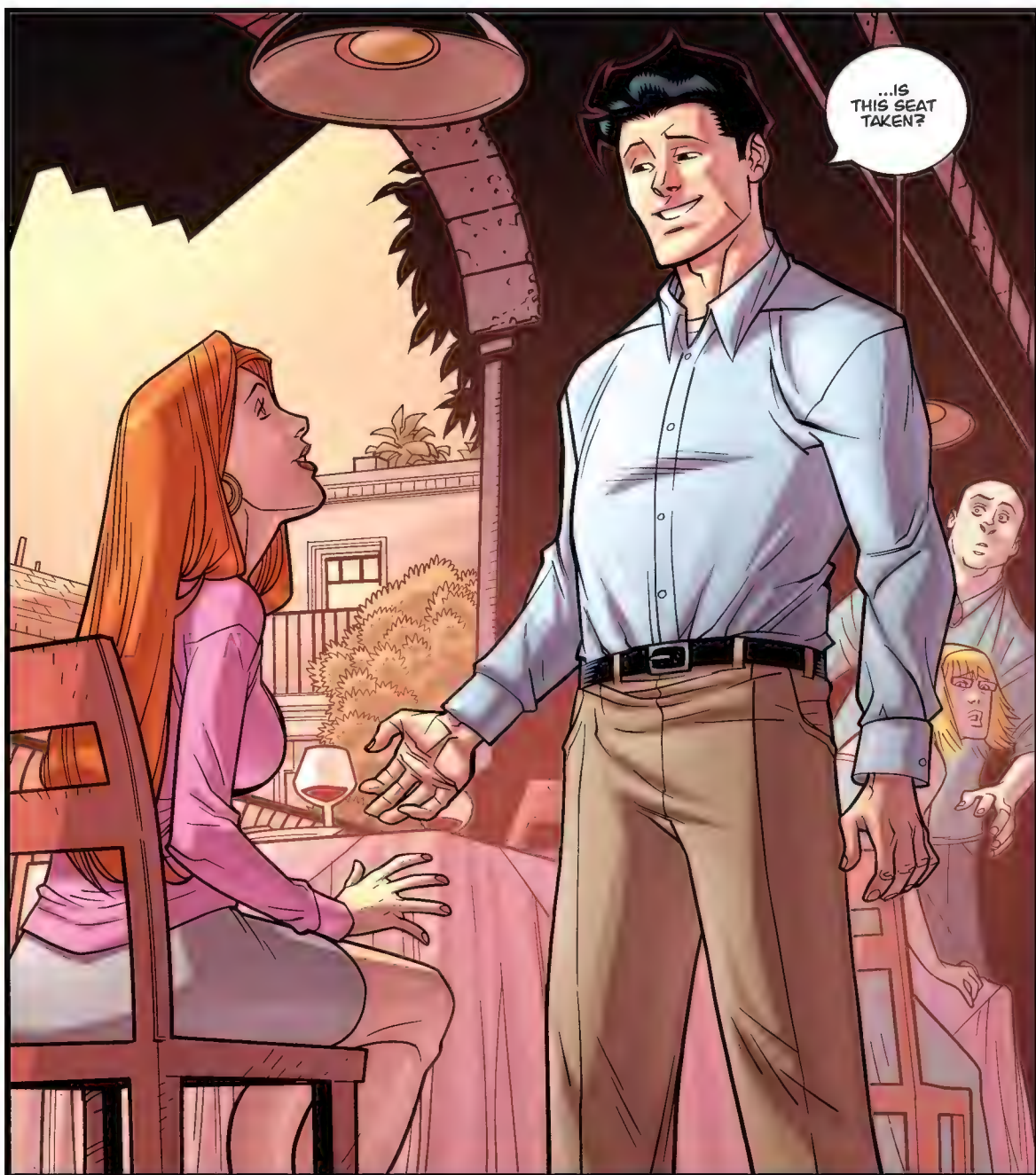
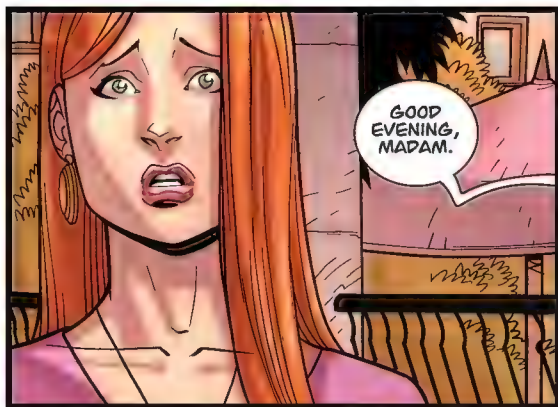
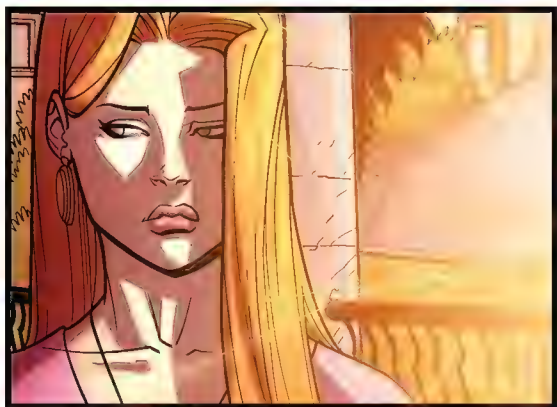
HE'S NOT REALLY DEAD. YOU NEED TO KEEP WHAT'S LEFT OF HIM SEPARATED OR HE'LL COME BACK--THAT'S HOW HE WORKS.













BUT YOU  
JUST... HOW  
DID--?

I DON'T  
GET IT.

TIME TRAVEL--  
I'VE BEEN AWAY  
FOR A WHILE, BUT  
THEY LET ME  
RETURN EXACTLY  
WHEN I LEFT.  
COOL, HUH?

YEAH,  
ACTUALLY.  
VERY MUCH  
SO. DATE:  
**UNINTERRUPTED.**  
GIRLFRIEND:  
**HAPPY.**

WHAT I JUST DID IN THE  
FUTURE, WELL--I DON'T  
REALLY WANT TO TALK  
ABOUT IT NOW... BUT  
THERE WERE SOME  
THINGS THAT WERE  
SAID--ABOUT ME IN THE  
FUTURE AND, WELL...  
DO YOU THINK  
I'M A GOOD  
PERSON?

WHAT ARE YOU  
TALKING ABOUT?  
I'M HERE, AREN'T  
I? OF COURSE I  
DO. WHAT  
HAPPENED  
THERE?

NOT NOW, LET ME  
JUST... I REALLY  
LIKE YOU AND I WANT  
TO SPEND MORE TIME  
WITH YOU BUT THE  
SUPERHERO STUFF  
HAS KEPT GETTING IN  
THE WAY. I THINK  
I CAN STOP THAT  
NOW.

I'M JUST  
GOING TO BE  
MORE DEVOTED  
TO MAKING THIS  
WORK--WE  
NEED TO BE  
TOGETHER, I  
CAN SEE THAT  
NOW...

UH...

MAYBE  
WE SHOULD  
GET OUT OF  
HERE.

LET'S.

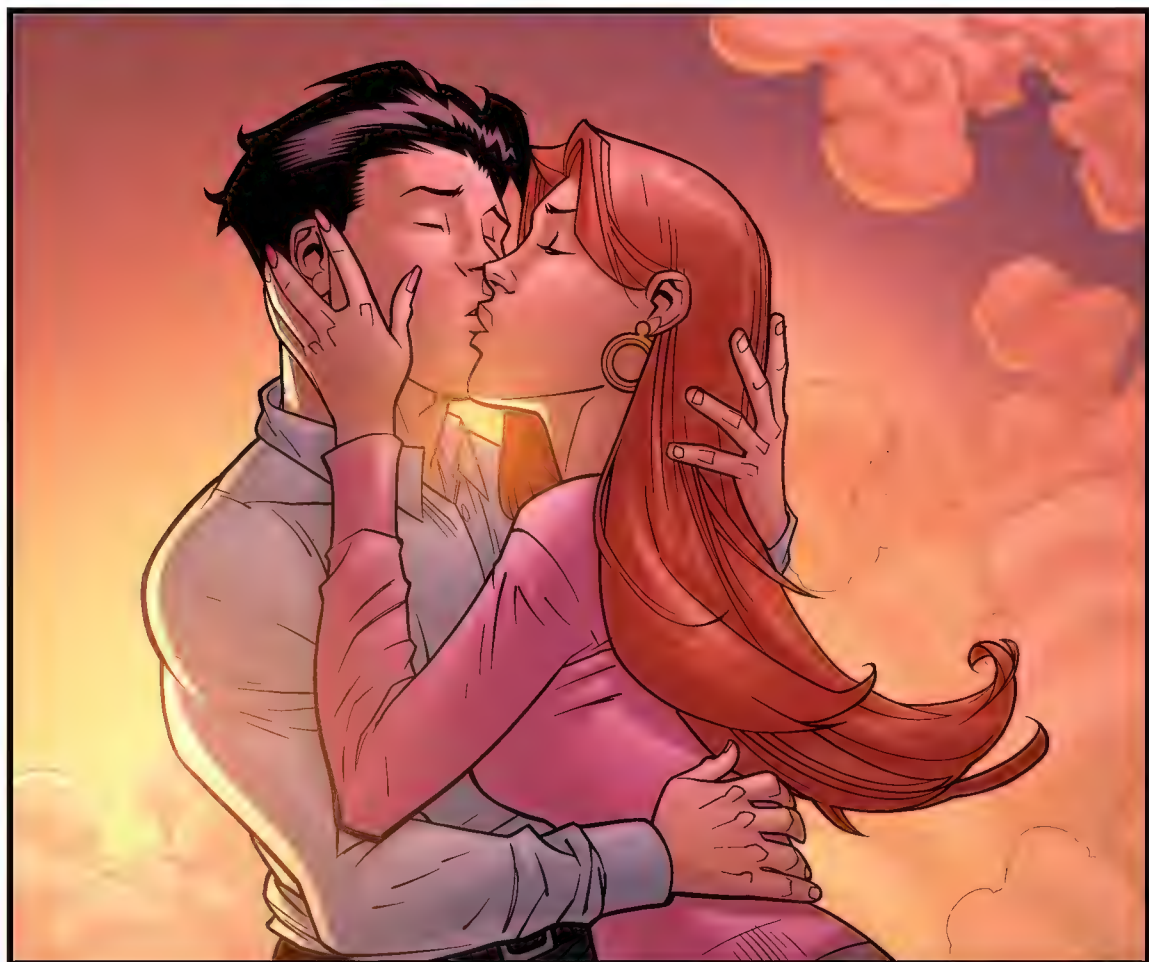
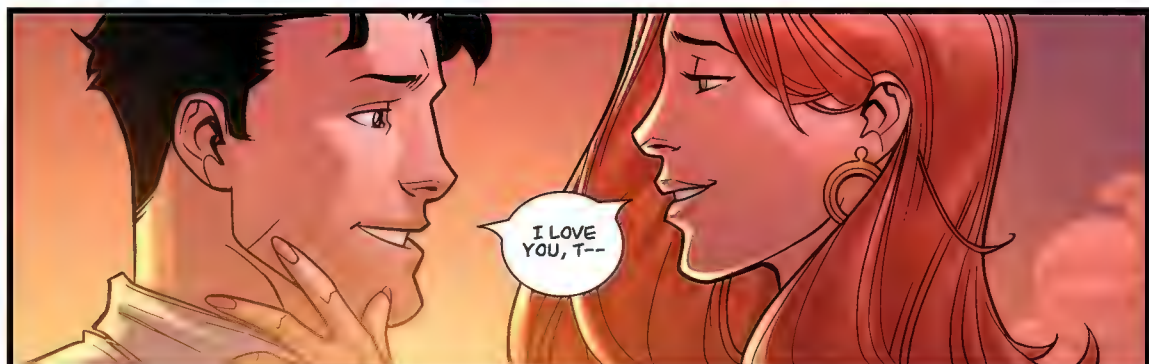
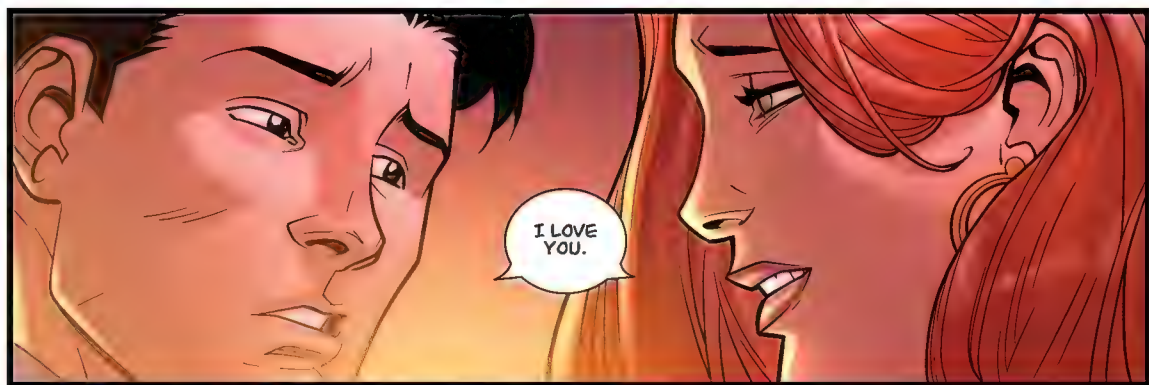




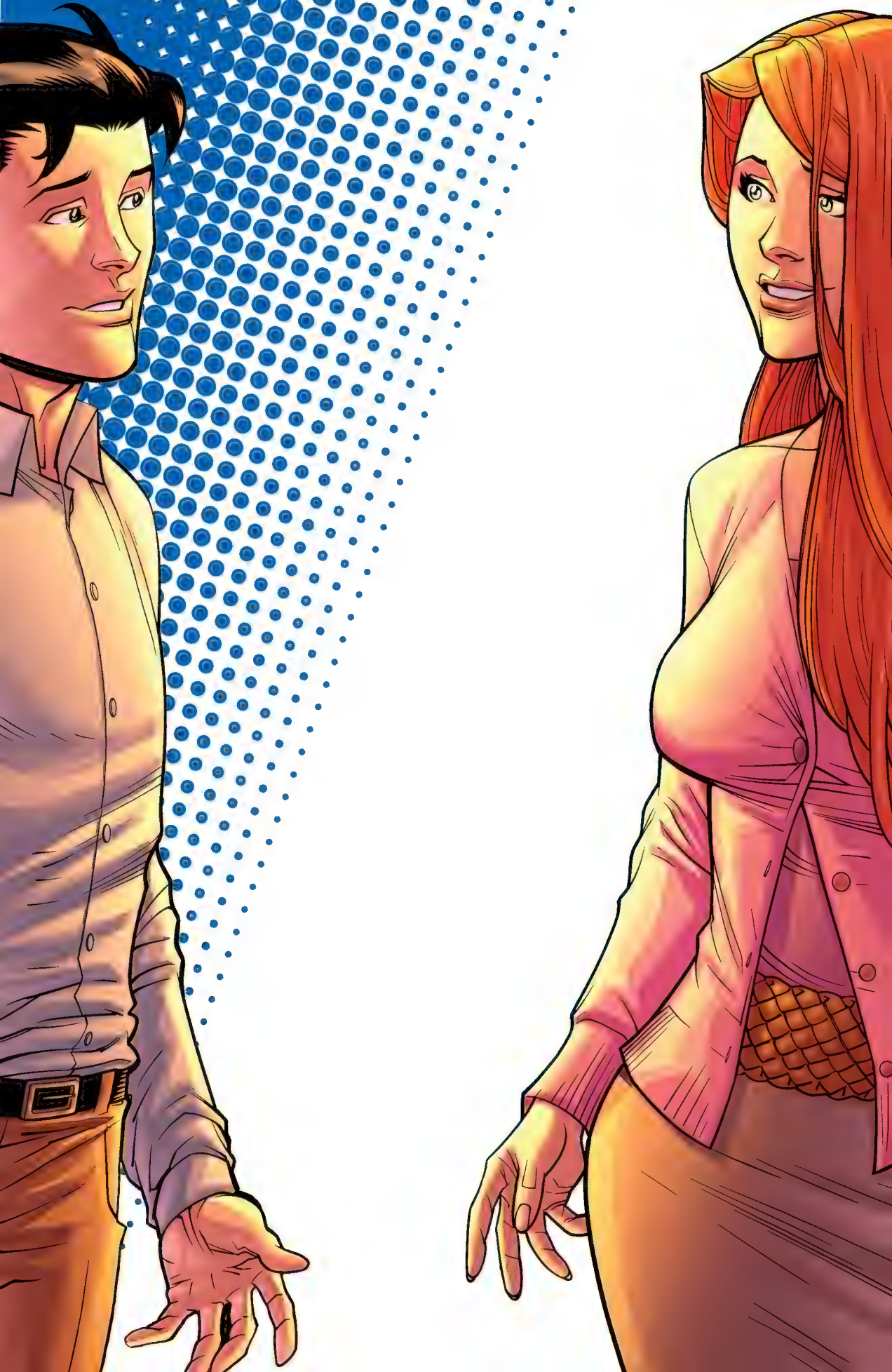










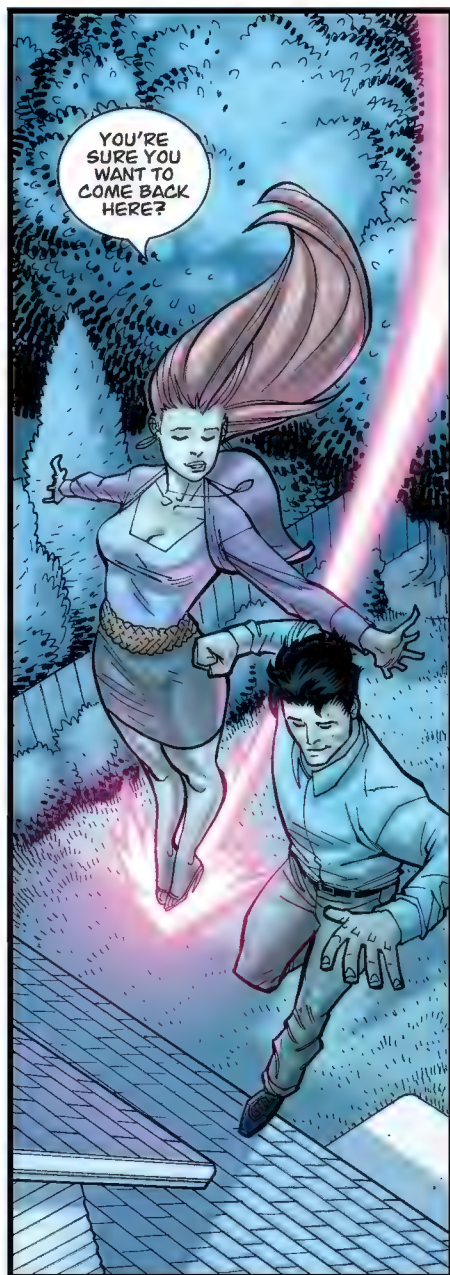




# CHAPTER 55



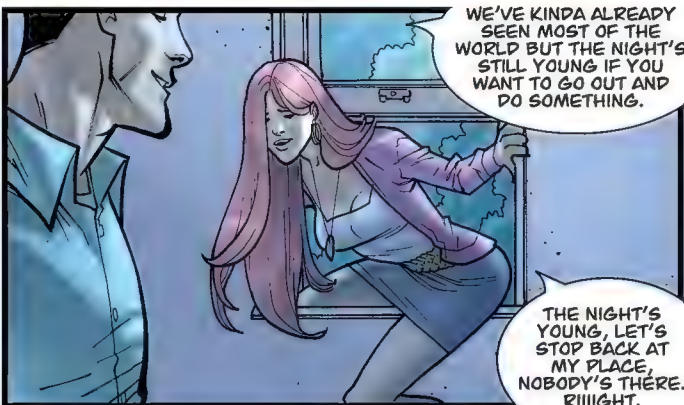




YOU'RE SURE YOU WANT TO COME BACK HERE?

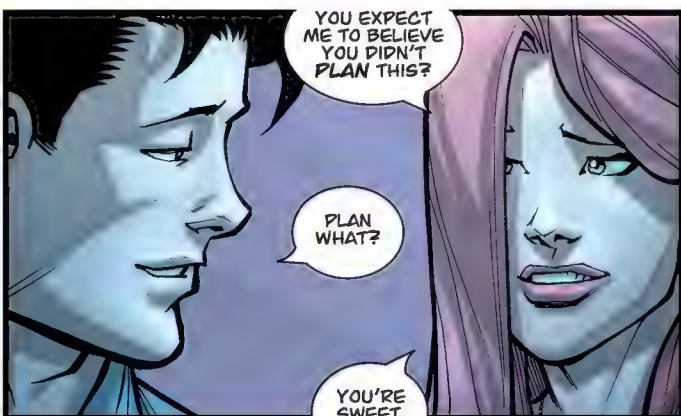
SURE, I FIGURED THIS IS AS GOOD A PLACE AS ANY TO JUST SIT AND TALK. I THINK MY MOM'S OUT ON A DATE... OLIVER'S TUTOR TOOK HIM TO SEE SOME PLAY TONIGHT.

THERE'S NOBODY HERE.



WE'VE KINDA ALREADY SEEN MOST OF THE WORLD BUT THE NIGHT'S STILL YOUNG IF YOU WANT TO GO OUT AND DO SOMETHING.

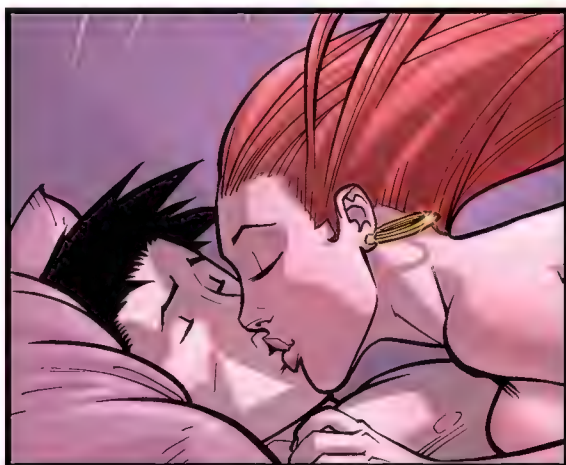
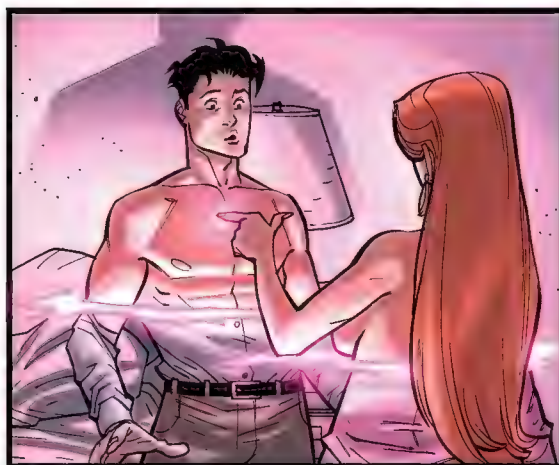
THE NIGHT'S YOUNG, LET'S STOP BACK AT MY PLACE, NOBODY'S THERE. RIIIGHT.



YOU EXPECT ME TO BELIEVE YOU DIDN'T PLAN THIS?

PLAN WHAT?

YOU'RE SWEET.





BORN OF A DWINDLING NOMADIC RACE, ROBBED OF THEIR HOMEWORLD BY THE FEARSOME VILTRUMITES! EXPERIMENTED ON TO INCREASE HIS STRENGTH AND SPEED UNTIL HE EMERGED A GUARDIAN OF THE SPACEWAYS! IMAGE COMICS PRESENTS: ALLEN THE ALIEN IN:

# LOCK DOWN, BUT NOT OUT!

AND SO, DEAR READER, WE TURN OUR ATTENTION ELSEWHERE TO GIVE YOUNG MARK GRAYSON AND SAMANTHA EVE WILKINS SOME *PRIVACY*.

THIS IS A FAMILY TITLE AFTER ALL.

YES, WE TURN OUR ATTENTION TO FAN FAVORITE, ALLEN THE ALIEN... WHO CURRENTLY RESIDES IN A VILTRUMITE PRISON CELL... FOR NOW.

YOU SEE, THESE SHACKLES CANNOT HOLD HIM. THESE WALLS CANNOT HOLD HIM. THIS PRISON CANNOT HOLD HIM, FOR ALLEN THE ALIEN HAS GROWN STRONG, *VERY* STRONG.\*

BUT STILL, HE REMAINS, STILL HE WAITS...

...BECAUSE ALLEN THE ALIEN HAS A *PLAN*.

\*SEE ISSUE 38 FOR DETAILS, INVINCIBLEHEADS.

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INVINCIBLE Vol 1, No 55, OCTOBER, 2008 (U.S.P.S. 426-730) Published by IMAGE COMICS Robert Kirkman, Chief Operating Officer, Erik Larsen, Chief Financial Officer, Todd McFarlane, President, Marc Silvestri, Chief Executive Officer, Jim Valentino, Vice-President. OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 1942 UNIVERSITY AVENUE, SUITE 305, BERKELEY, CA 94704. SECOND CLASS POSTAGE PAID AT NEW YORK, N.Y. AND AT ADDITIONAL MAILING OFFICES. Published monthly, Copyright © 2008 by ROBERT KIRKMAN & CORY WALKER. All rights reserved. Price \$2.95 per copy in the U.S. and \$3.65 in Canada. Subscription rate for 12 issues: U.S. \$12.00; Canada \$17.00; and foreign \$24.00. Printed in Canada. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. This periodical may not be sold except by authorized dealers and is sold subject to the condition that it shall not be sold or distributed with any part of its cover or markings removed, nor in a mutilated condition. INVINCIBLE (including all prominent characters featured in the issue and the distinctive likenesses thereof) are trademarks of ROBERT KIRKMAN & CORY WALKER. POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO INVINCIBLE, c/o IMAGE COMICS, 1942 UNIVERSITY AVENUE, SUITE 305, BERKELEY, CA 94704.



ALLEN IS HERE FOR A REASON  
AND THAT REASON IS NOLAN  
GRAYSON, OTHERWISE KNOWN  
AS OMNI-MAN, THE FATHER  
OF INVINCIBLE.

HE ALLOWED HIMSELF  
TO BE TAKEN PRISONER  
WHEN HE LEARNED  
NOLAN WAS BEING  
HELD HERE.\*

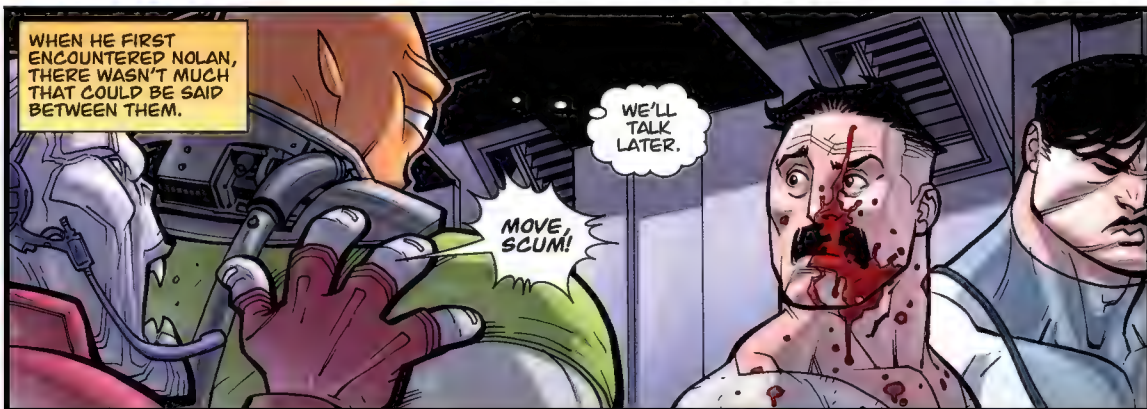
\*SEE ISSUE 45.



WHEN HE FIRST  
ENCOUNTERED NOLAN,  
THERE WASN'T MUCH  
THAT COULD BE SAID  
BETWEEN THEM.

WE'LL  
TALK  
LATER.

MOVE,  
SCUM!

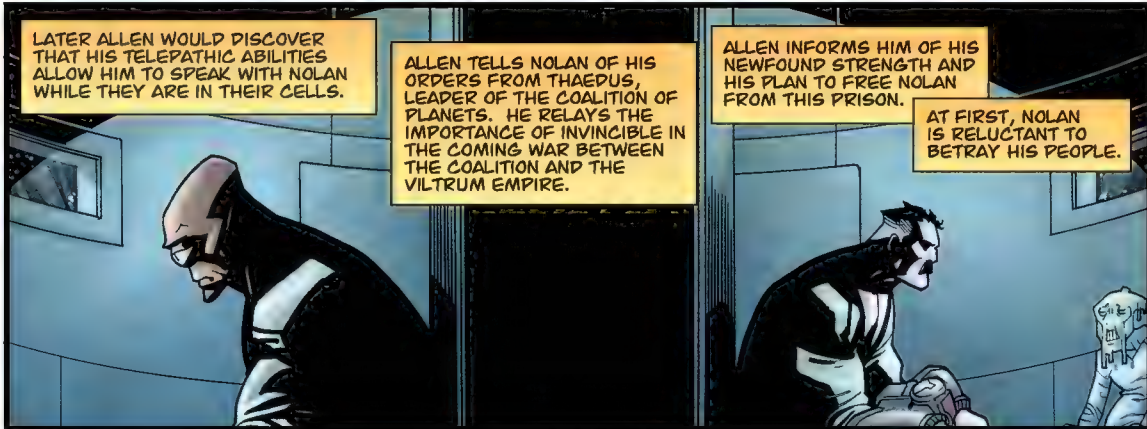


LATER ALLEN WOULD DISCOVER  
THAT HIS TELEPATHIC ABILITIES  
ALLOW HIM TO SPEAK WITH NOLAN  
WHILE THEY ARE IN THEIR CELLS.

ALLEN TELLS NOLAN OF HIS  
ORDERS FROM THAEPUS,  
LEADER OF THE COALITION OF  
PLANETS. HE RELAYS THE  
IMPORTANCE OF INVINCIBLE IN  
THE COMING WAR BETWEEN  
THE COALITION AND THE  
VILTRUM EMPIRE.

ALLEN INFORMS HIM OF HIS  
NEWFOUND STRENGTH AND  
HIS PLAN TO FREE NOLAN  
FROM THIS PRISON.

AT FIRST, NOLAN  
IS RELUCTANT TO  
BETRAY HIS PEOPLE.



ALLEN CONTINUES TO  
TELL NOLAN ALL HE  
KNOWS ABOUT NOLAN'S  
BOOKS, INVINCIBLE AND  
HIS NEW YOUNGER  
BROTHER, AND  
EVENTUALLY, HE BEGINS  
TO TELL HIM OF  
OTHER THINGS.

HER NAME IS  
TELIA AND SHE IS  
VERY SPECIAL TO  
ME. I LOVE HER. I  
DO. BUT MY PEOPLE  
WON'T ALLOW ME  
TO BE WITH  
HER.

MY PEOPLE,  
THE UNOPANS, WERE  
NEARLY EXTINCT--WE  
HAVE STRICT MATING  
RULES TO ENSURE OUR  
SURVIVAL. WE HAVE TO  
LIVE IN SECRET...







EVENTUALLY, THIS LED TO NOLAN TALKING ABOUT OTHER THINGS AS WELL.

I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL-- NOT EXACTLY, BUT I HAVE FEELINGS THAT GO AGAINST EVERYTHING I'VE EVER BELIEVED TO BE TRUE.

MY ENTIRE EXISTENCE HAS BEEN PUT INTO QUESTION. I FEEL A LOVE I'VE NEVER FELT BEFORE, MADE STRONGER BY ABSENCE, AND IT'S SOMETHING, AS A VILTRUMITE, I SHOULD NOT BE FEELING.



MANY THINGS WERE DISCUSSED IN THE TIME NOLAN AWAITED EXECUTION FOR HIS CRIMES AGAINST THE VILTRUM EMPIRE.

EVENTUALLY THEY EVEN DISCUSSED THEIR MANY ENCOUNTERS IN EARTH'S ORBIT, YEARS AGO AT THIS POINT, WHEN NEITHER ONE KNEW ANYTHING ABOUT THE OTHER.\*

A BOND STARTED TO FORM.

\*SEEN BRIEFLY IN ISSUE 2 AND AGAIN IN ISSUE 11.



UNTIL THEY WERE FRIENDS.

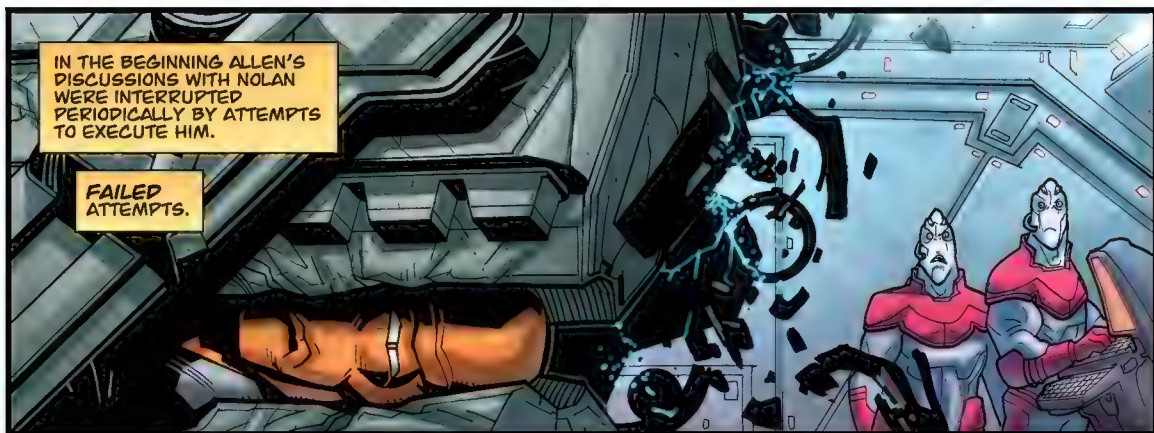


THAT BOND GREW, UNTIL THE MISSION BECAME THAT MUCH MORE IMPORTANT.

ALLEN WAS NO LONGER THERE TO RESCUE A POSSIBLE ALLY.

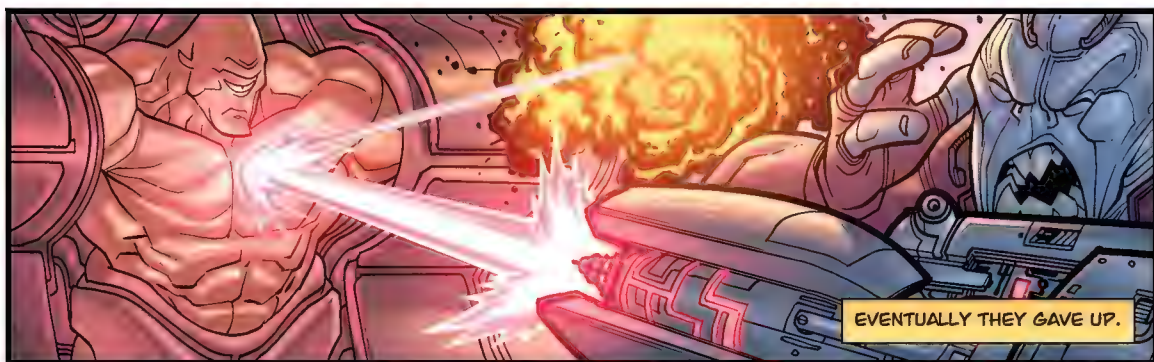
HE NEEDED TO SAVE HIS FRIEND AND HE WAS NOT SURE HE WOULD SUCCEED--AND THIS WORRIED HIM.





IN THE BEGINNING ALLEN'S DISCUSSIONS WITH NOLAN WERE INTERRUPTED PERIODICALLY BY ATTEMPTS TO EXECUTE HIM.

FAILED ATTEMPTS.



EVENTUALLY THEY GAVE UP.



THEY STOPPED TRYING TO EXECUTE HIM. FROM THAT POINT ON, ALLEN WAITED--LIKE NOLAN, HE WAITED FOR THE TIME WHEN THE VILTRUMITES THEMSELVES WOULD FINALLY COME TO EXECUTE HIM.

HE WAITED.

AND WAITED.

AND WAITED.



ALLEN WOULD OFTEN WONDER TO HIMSELF WHY IT WAS TAKING SO LONG. WHAT IS IT THEY WERE WAITING ON?

WHY WERE THEY WAITING?



WHY?

IT'S TIME.

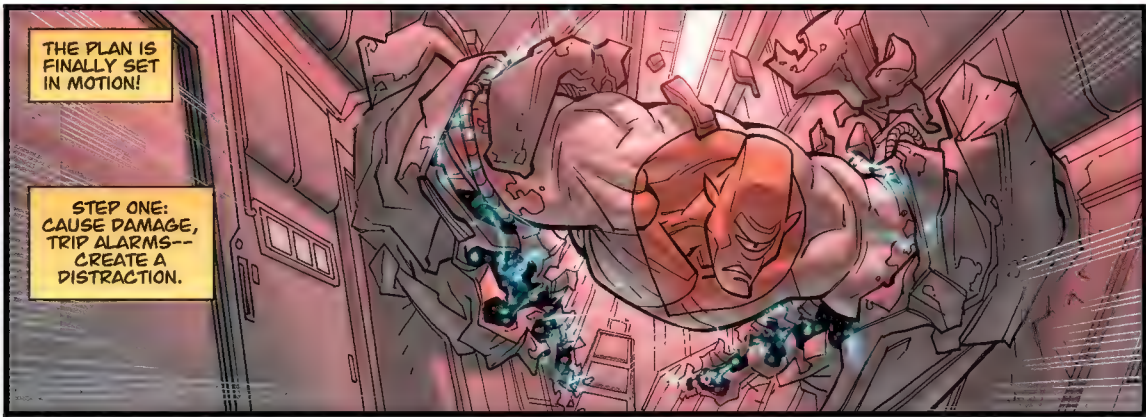






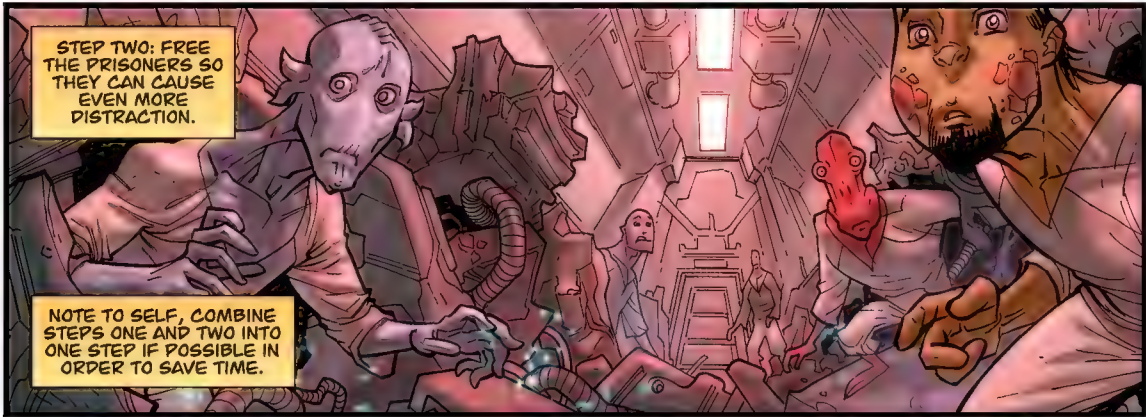


IT WAS THEN THAT THE ABSURDITY OF ALLEN ACTUALLY BEING CONTAINED IN THIS PRISON BECAME ALL TOO CLEAR.



THE PLAN IS FINALLY SET IN MOTION!

STEP ONE: CAUSE DAMAGE, TRIP ALARMS-- CREATE A DISTRACTION.



STEP TWO: FREE THE PRISONERS SO THEY CAN CAUSE EVEN MORE DISTRACTION.

NOTE TO SELF, COMBINE STEPS ONE AND TWO INTO ONE STEP IF POSSIBLE IN ORDER TO SAVE TIME.



STEP THREE: SCAN THE PRISONERS AS THEY ESCAPE, SEE IF ANY OF THEM ARE FORMIDABLE ENOUGH TO AID US IN OUR ESCAPE EFFORTS.



STEP ONE: CHECK.

STEP TWO: CHECK.

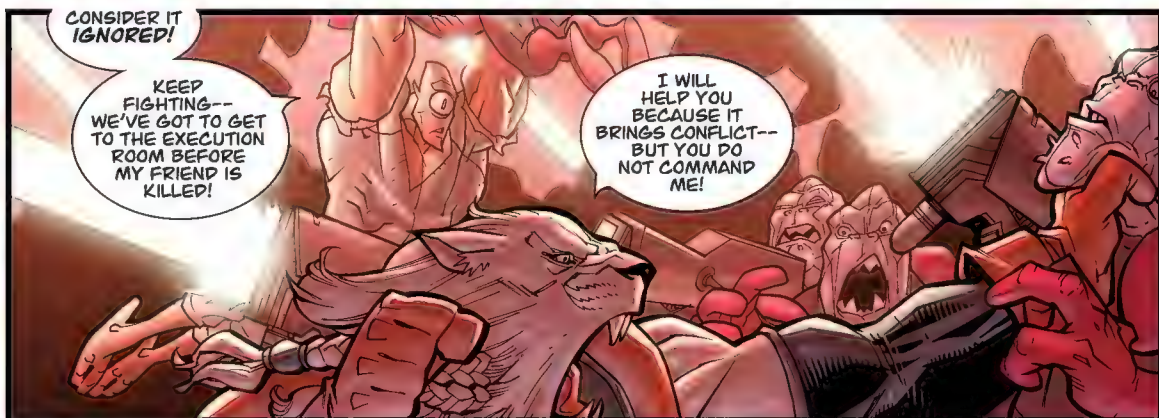
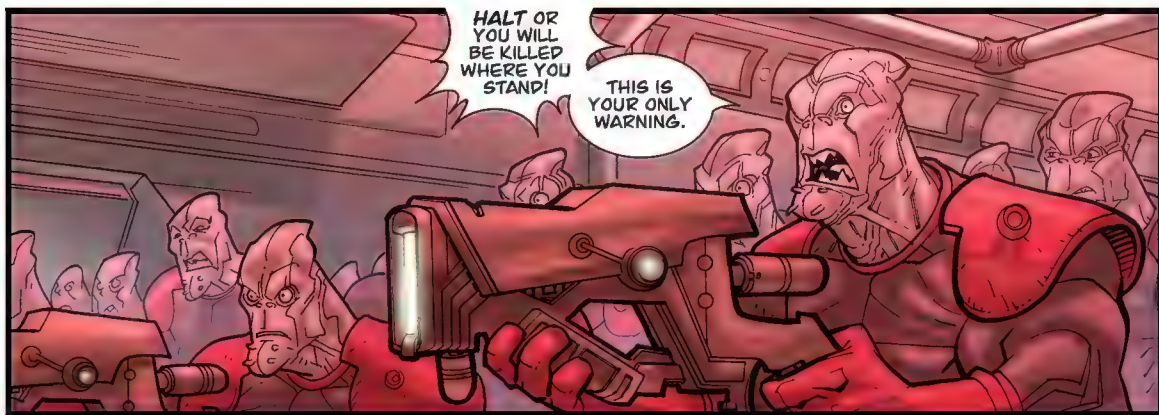
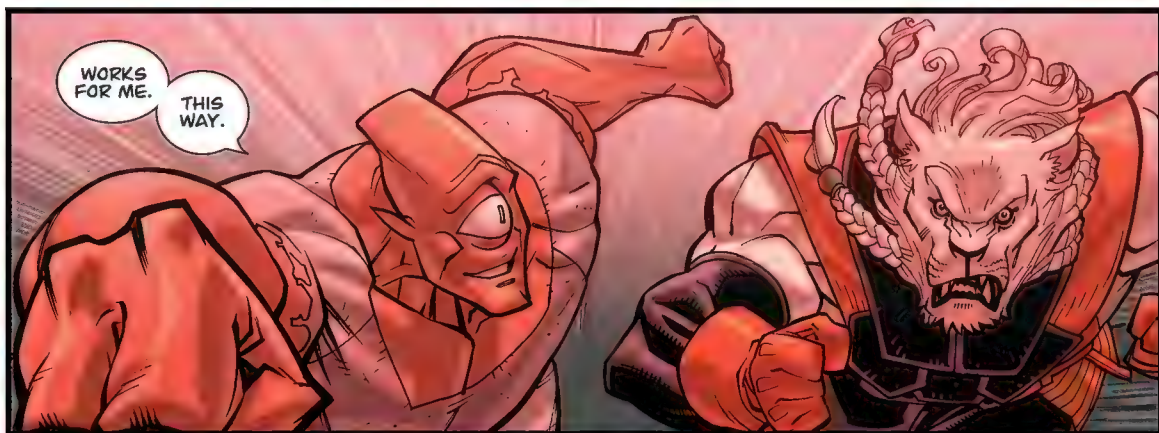
STEP THREE: ...?

WHO IS  
BRAVE ENOUGH  
TO FREE  
**BATTLE  
BEAST?!**

CHECK.



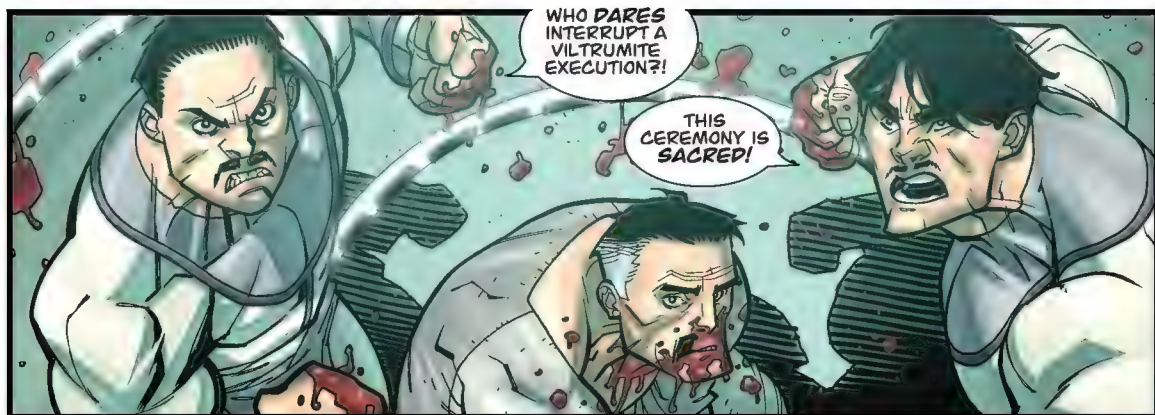




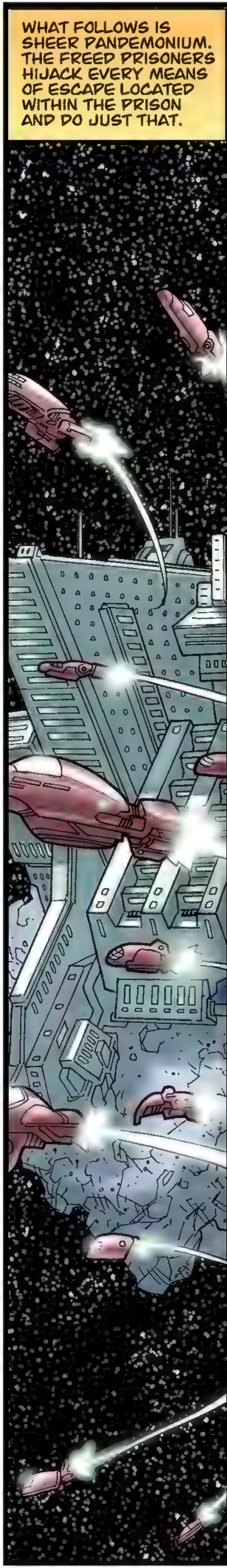












WHAT FOLLOWS IS SHEER PANDEMONIUM. THE FREED PRISONERS HIJACK EVERY MEANS OF ESCAPE LOCATED WITHIN THE PRISON AND DO JUST THAT.



ALLEN'S NEW FRIEND, BATTLE BEAST, FOCUSES ONLY ON ONE VILTRUMITE, HELPING ONLY BY KEEPING HIM OCCUPIED.

HE HAS FOUND HIS WORTHY ADVERSARY AND IS CONTENT TO SIMPLY ENJOY THE BATTLE.



THIS LEAVES NOLAN AND ALLEN ALONE TO FACE THE REMAINING VILTRUMITE EXECUTIONER-- AND HIS ARMY OF SUPER-POWERED PRISON GUARDS.

IT ISN'T A FIGHT EASILY WON.



BUT IT'S NOT FOR LACK OF TRYING ON THEIR PART.

HOLD UP--

I'VE GOT AN IDEA! WE CAN SURVIVE OUT IN SPACE--



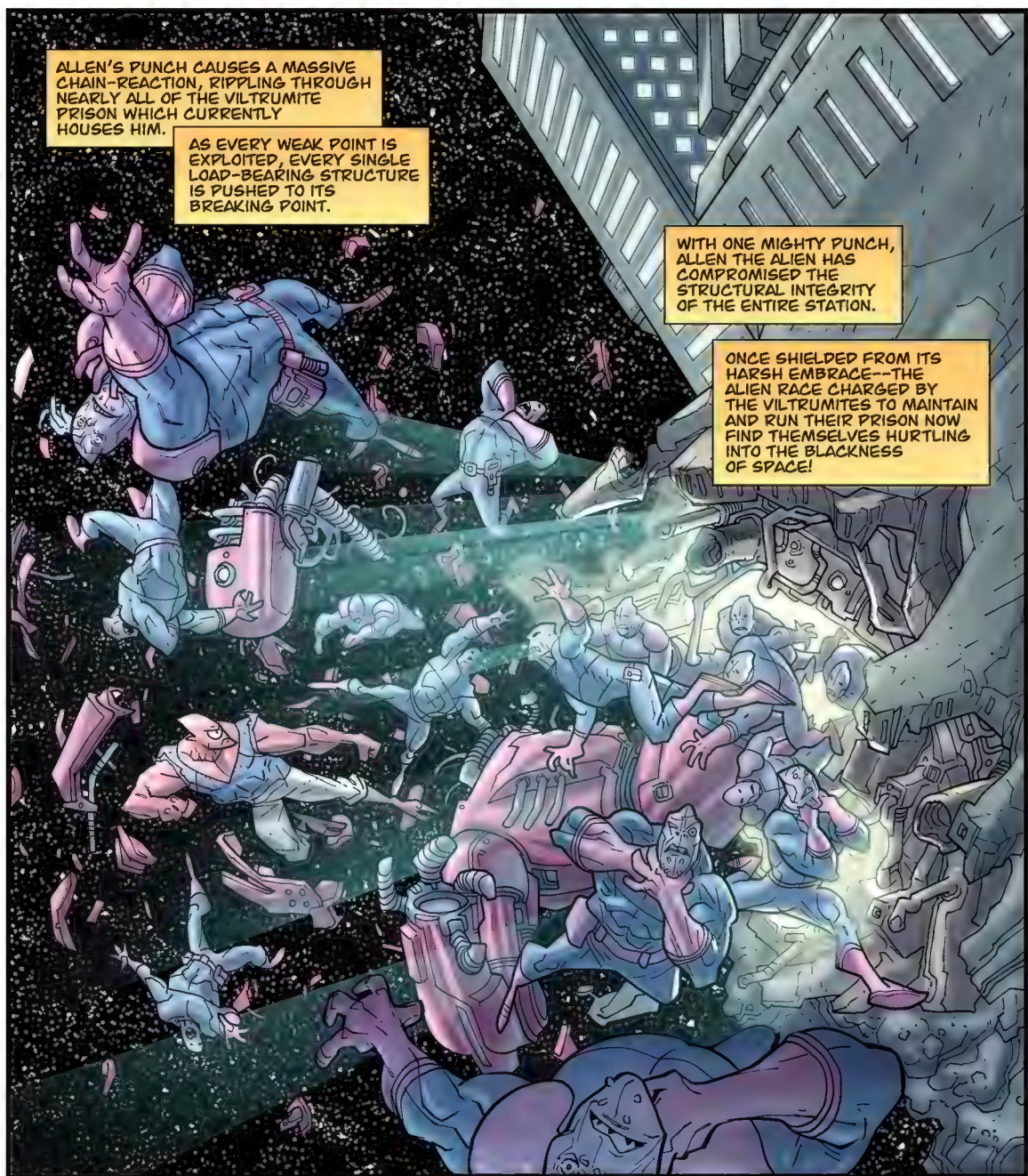


ALLEN'S PUNCH CAUSES A MASSIVE CHAIN-REACTION, RIPPLING THROUGH NEARLY ALL OF THE VILTRUMITE PRISON WHICH CURRENTLY HOUSES HIM.

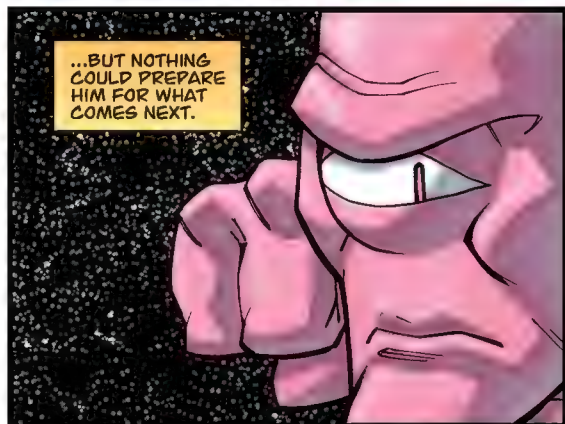
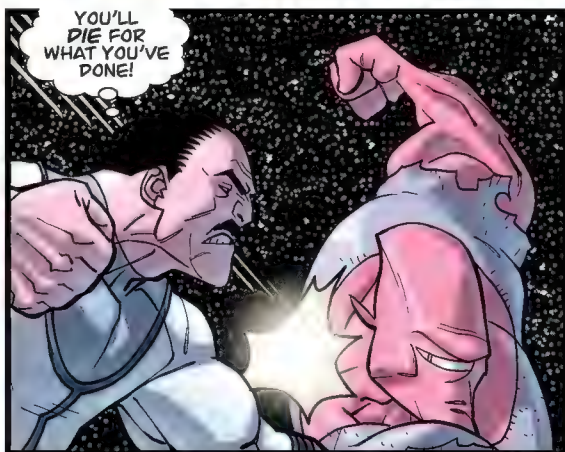
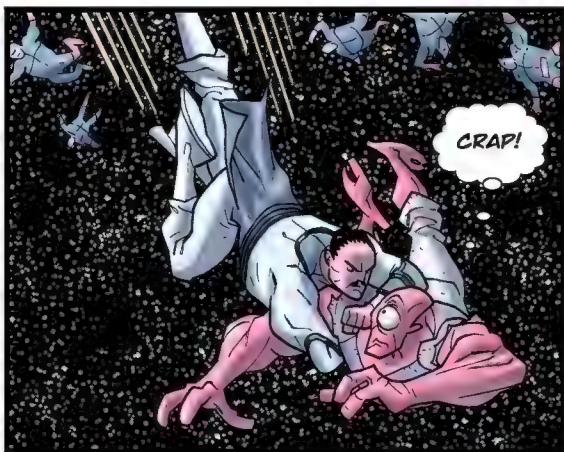
AS EVERY WEAK POINT IS EXPLOITED, EVERY SINGLE LOAD-BEARING STRUCTURE IS PUSHED TO ITS BREAKING POINT.

WITH ONE MIGHTY PUNCH, ALLEN THE ALIEN HAS COMPROMISED THE STRUCTURAL INTEGRITY OF THE ENTIRE STATION.

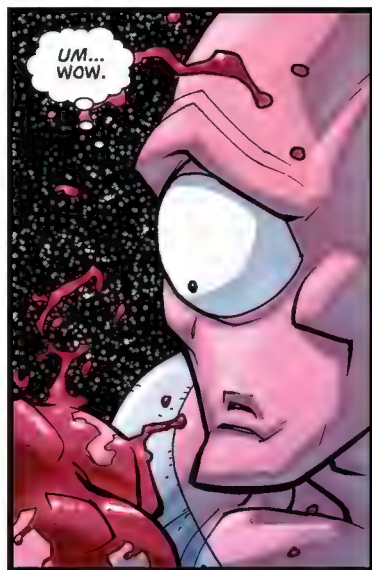
ONCE SHIELDED FROM ITS HARSH EMBRACE--THE ALIEN RACE CHARGED BY THE VILTRUMITES TO MAINTAIN AND RUN THEIR PRISON NOW FIND THEMSELVES HURLING INTO THE BLACKNESS OF SPACE!











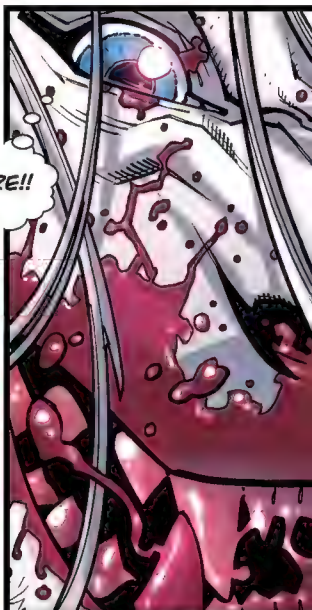
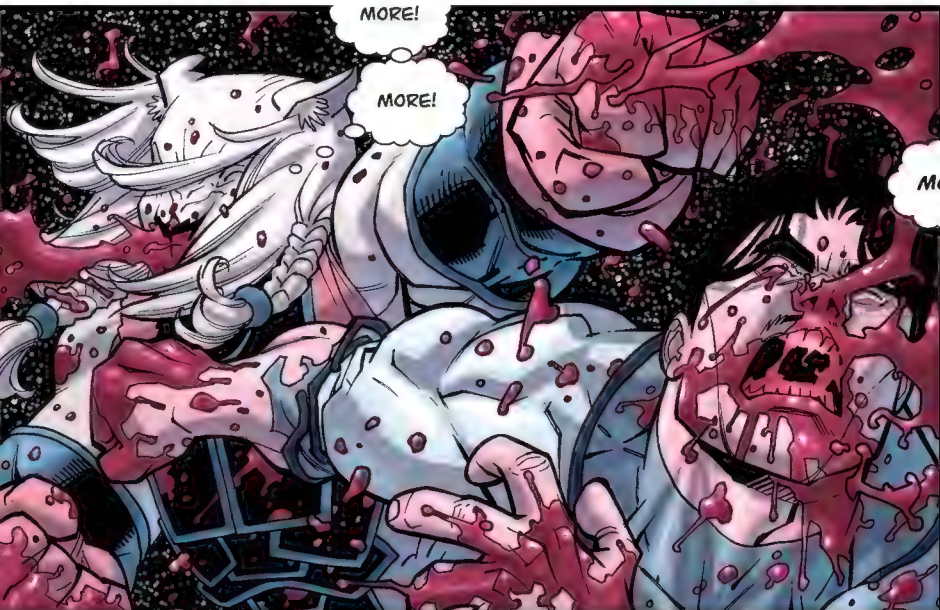




WHERE'S  
THAT OTHER  
VILTRUMITE--  
AND MY FURRY  
FRIEND?

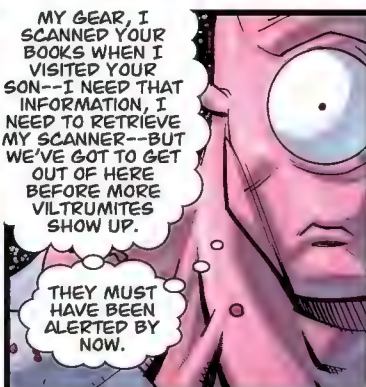
I HAVEN'T  
SEEN THEM SINCE  
YOU DEMOLISHED  
THAT WALL AND  
SENT US OUT HERE--  
YOU THINK HE  
COULD SURVIVE  
OUT HERE?

NO DOUBT.  
MAYBE HE JUST  
RAN--BUT THEN  
WHERE'S THE  
VILTRUMITE?



CRAP!

WHAT  
IS IT?



MY GEAR, I  
SCANNED YOUR  
BOOKS WHEN I  
VISITED YOUR  
SON--I NEED THAT  
INFORMATION, I  
NEED TO RETRIEVE  
MY SCANNER--BUT  
WE'VE GOT TO GET  
OUT OF HERE  
BEFORE MORE  
VILTRUMITES  
SHOW UP.

THEY MUST  
HAVE BEEN  
ALERTED BY  
NOW.



YOU  
DON'T HAVE  
TO WORRY  
ABOUT  
THAT.

WHY?



YOU HAVE  
TIME TO GET  
YOUR GEAR.  
TAKE YOUR TIME,  
WE'LL LOOK  
FOR MORE  
SUPPLIES.

TRUST  
ME... NO  
ONE IS  
COMING.

HOW DO  
YOU KNOW  
THAT? HOW  
CAN YOU  
BE SO  
SURE?





THEY'RE NOT COMING  
BECAUSE THERE IS NO  
ONE TO **SEND**. I AM  
CONFIDENT IN THIS  
BECAUSE I KNOW HOW  
FAR AWAY THE  
VILTRUMITES  
ARE.

MY EXECUTION  
WAS POSTPONED  
BECAUSE THEY WERE  
CALLED AWAY--IT WAS  
ONLY RECENTLY THEY  
WERE ABLE TO SEND  
BACK THE TWO AGENTS  
REQUIRED BY LAW FOR  
AN EXECUTION. THEY  
HAD NO ONE TO  
SPARE.

THE  
REASON  
FOR THIS IS  
SIMPLE...

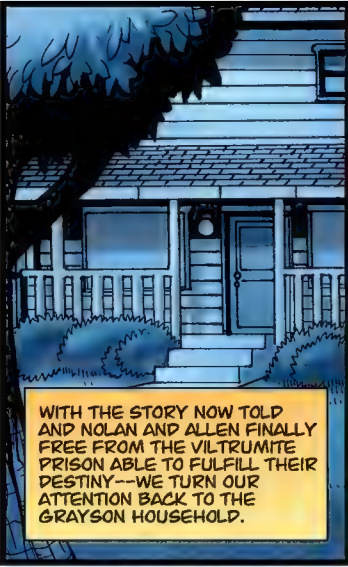
THERE ARE  
LESS THAN **FIFTY**  
PURE-BLOODED  
VILTRUMITES LEFT  
ALIVE IN THE WHOLE  
UNIVERSE.

THAT'S  
THE  
SECRET...

THAT'S THE  
THING THEY  
DON'T WANT  
ANYONE TO  
KNOW...

THAT'S  
WHY WE  
CAN **BEAT**  
THEM!



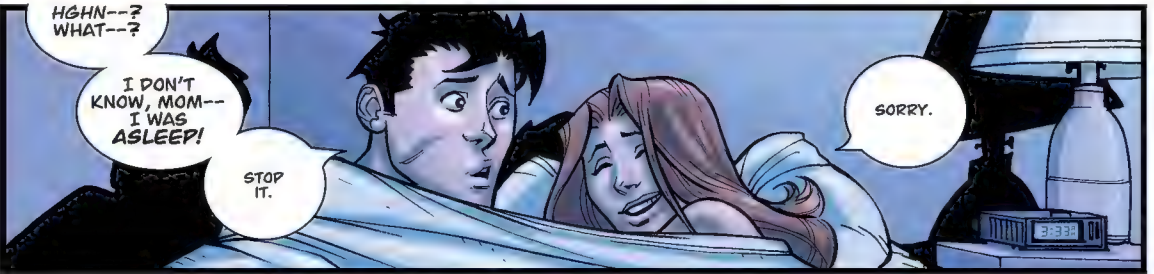


WITH THE STORY NOW TOLD AND NOLAN AND ALLEN FINALLY FREE FROM THE VILTRUMITE PRISON ABLE TO FULFILL THEIR DESTINY--WE TURN OUR ATTENTION BACK TO THE GRAYSON HOUSEHOLD.



MARK?! WHY'S THIS DOOR LOCKED?

WHAT'S GOING ON?



HGHN--? WHAT--?

I DON'T KNOW, MOM-- I WAS ASLEEP!

STOP IT.

SORRY.

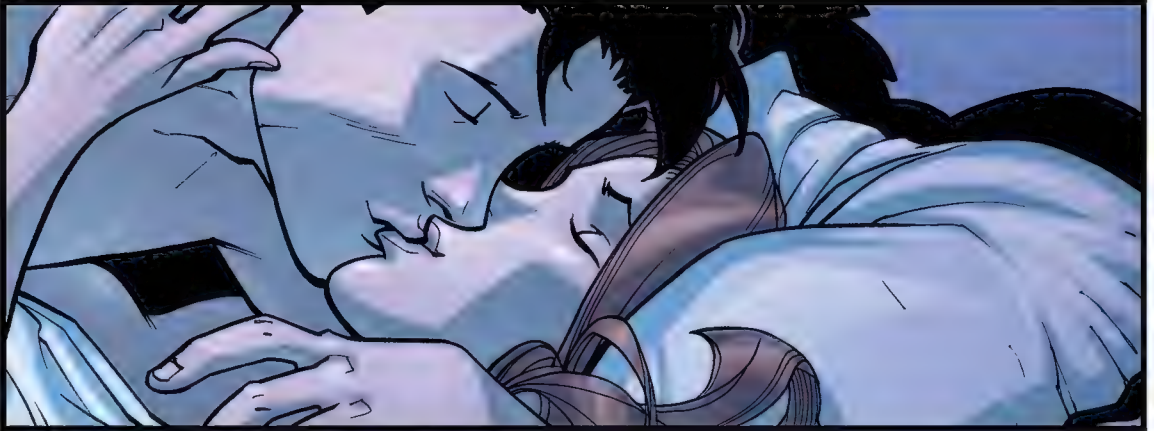


OH, SORRY... I THOUGHT I HEARD SOMETHING.

GOOD NIGHT.



GOOD NIGHT.





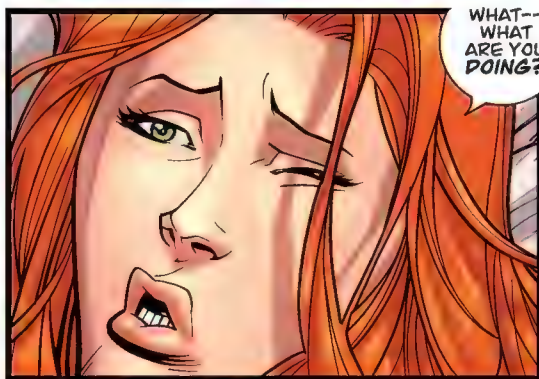
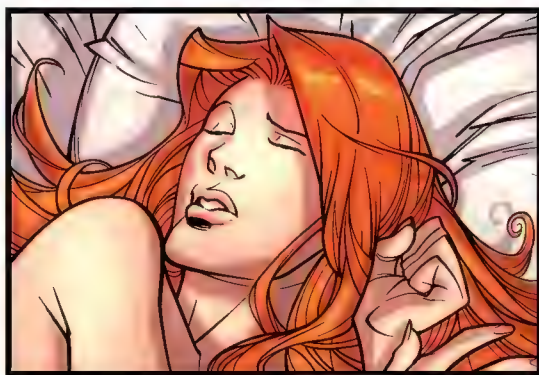
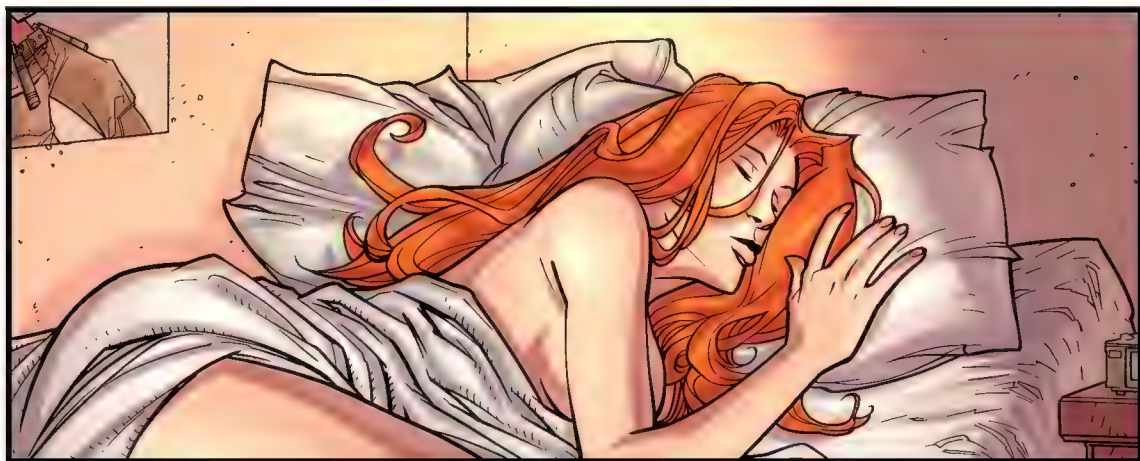
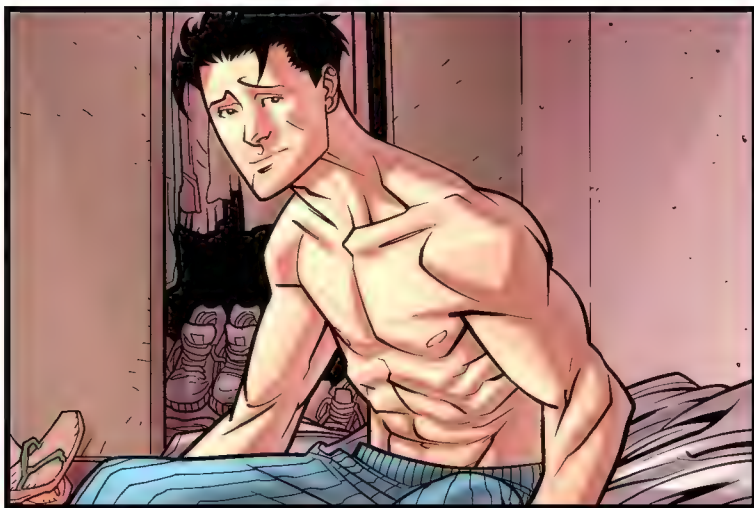
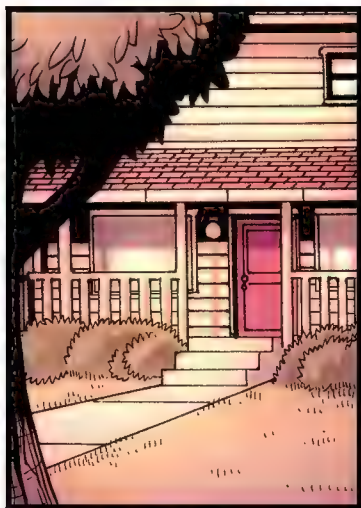




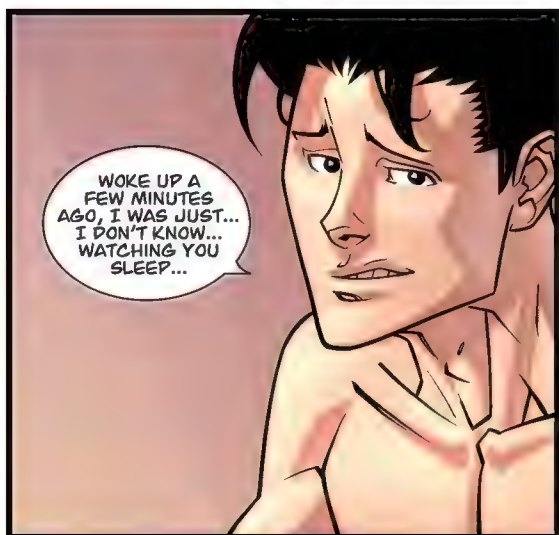
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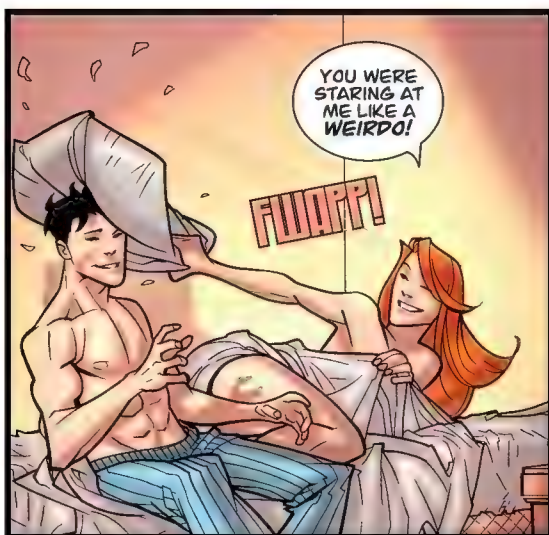






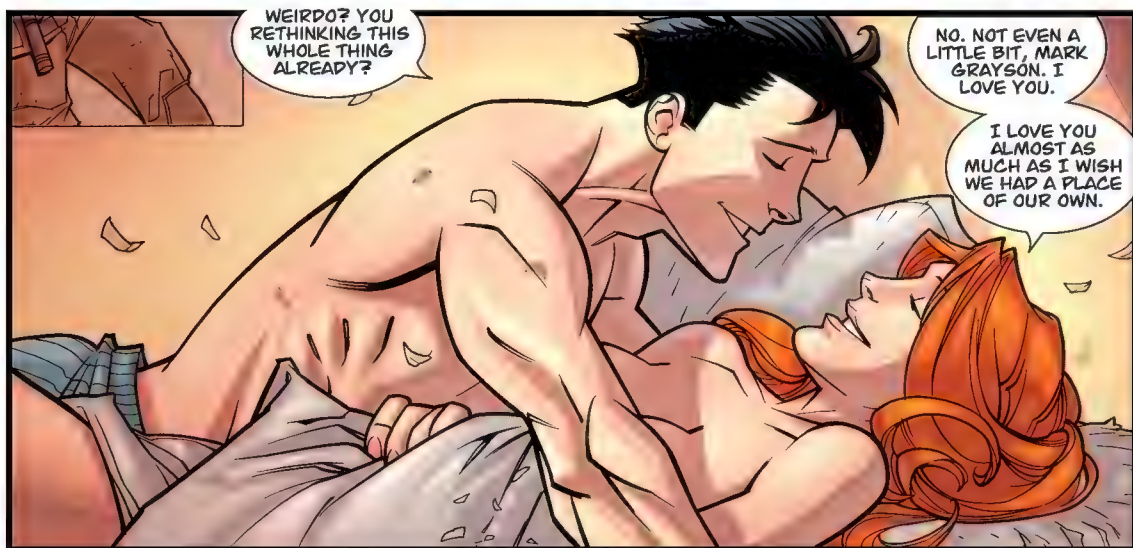


WOKE UP A FEW MINUTES AGO, I WAS JUST... I DON'T KNOW... WATCHING YOU SLEEP...



YOU WERE STARING AT ME LIKE A WEIRDO!

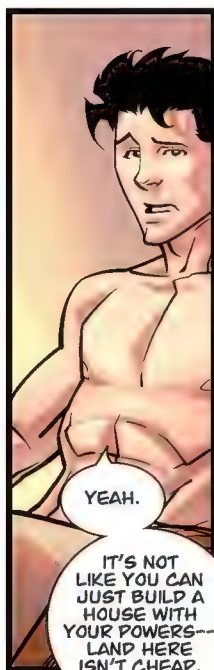
FWOOP!



WEIRDO? YOU RETHINKING THIS WHOLE THING ALREADY?

NO. NOT EVEN A LITTLE BIT, MARK GRAYSON. I LOVE YOU.

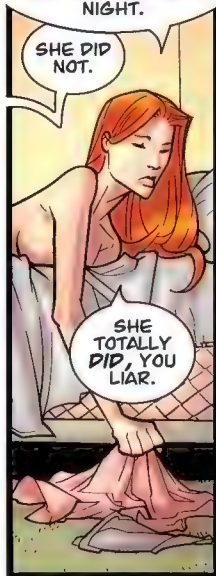
I LOVE YOU ALMOST AS MUCH AS I WISH WE HAD A PLACE OF OUR OWN.



YEAH.

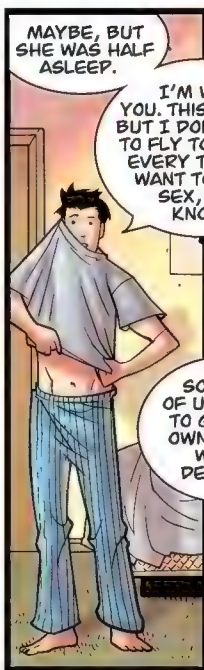
IT'S NOT LIKE YOU CAN JUST BUILD A HOUSE WITH YOUR POWERS--LAND HERE ISN'T CHEAP.

THIS ISN'T COOL. YOUR MOM'S WHAT--TEN FEET AWAY WHILE WE'RE DOING THIS? SHE HEARD US LAST NIGHT.



SHE DID NOT.

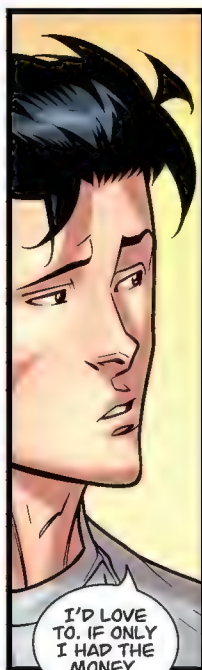
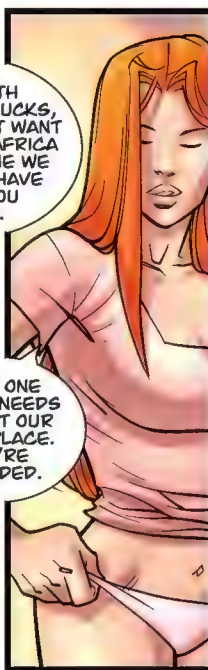
SHE TOTALLY DID, YOU LIAR.



MAYBE, BUT SHE WAS HALF ASLEEP.

I'M WITH YOU. THIS SUCKS, BUT I DON'T WANT TO FLY TO AFRICA EVERY TIME WE WANT TO HAVE SEX, YOU KNOW.

SO... ONE OF US NEEDS TO GET OUR OWN PLACE. WE'RE DECIDED.

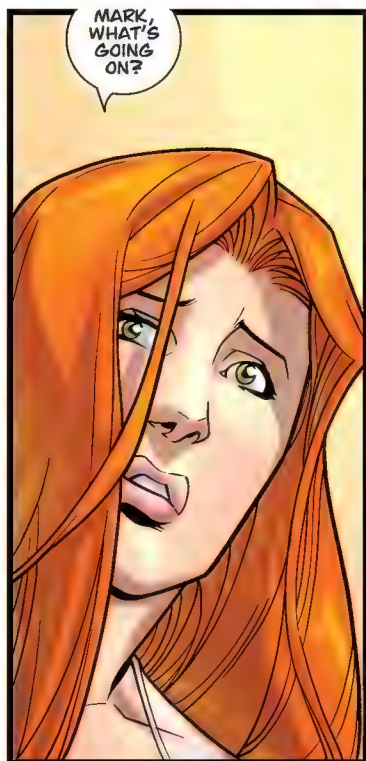
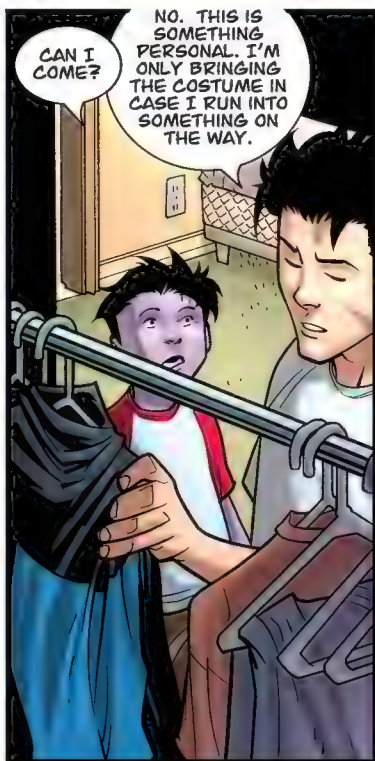


I'D LOVE TO. IF ONLY I HAD THE MONEY.

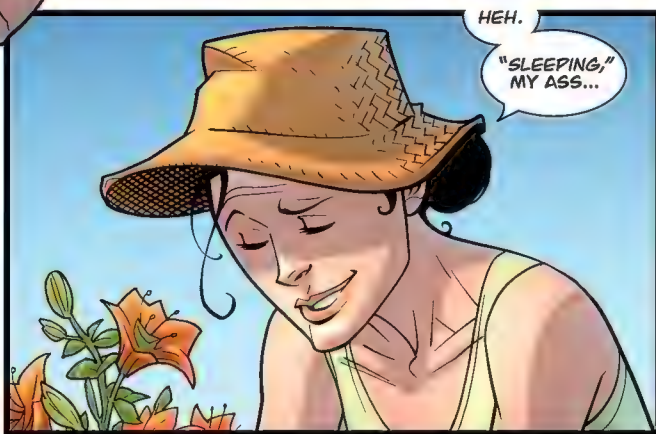
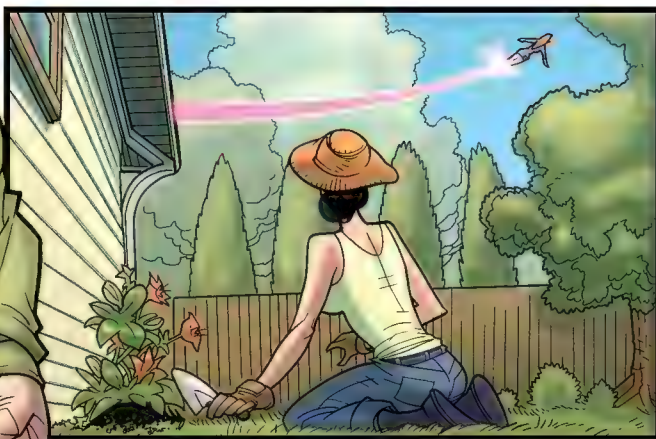




















AMBER?

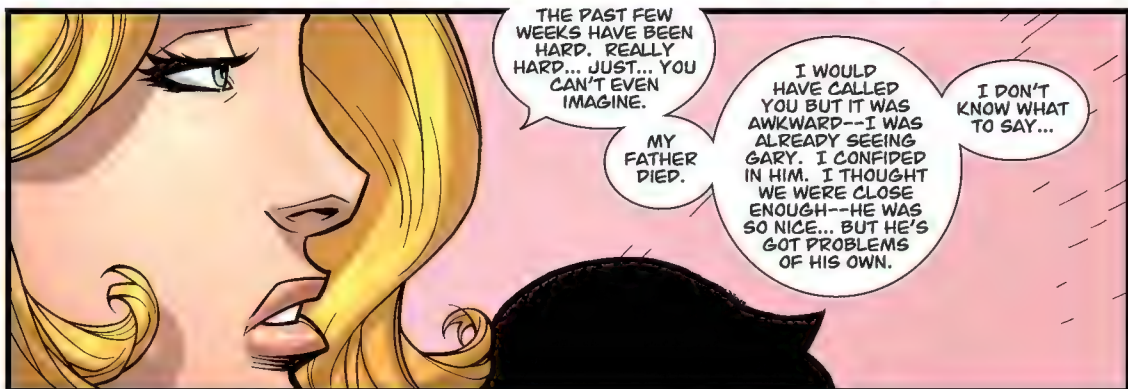


OH, I... I DON'T KNOW WHY, BUT I THOUGHT YOU'D BE COMING IN THROUGH THE DOOR.

FUNNY.



ARE YOU OKAY?



THE PAST FEW WEEKS HAVE BEEN HARD. REALLY HARD... JUST... YOU CAN'T EVEN IMAGINE.

MY FATHER DIED.

I WOULD HAVE CALLED YOU BUT IT WAS AWKWARD--I WAS ALREADY SEEING GARY. I CONFIDED IN HIM. I THOUGHT WE WERE CLOSE ENOUGH--HE WAS SO NICE... BUT HE'S GOT PROBLEMS OF HIS OWN.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY...

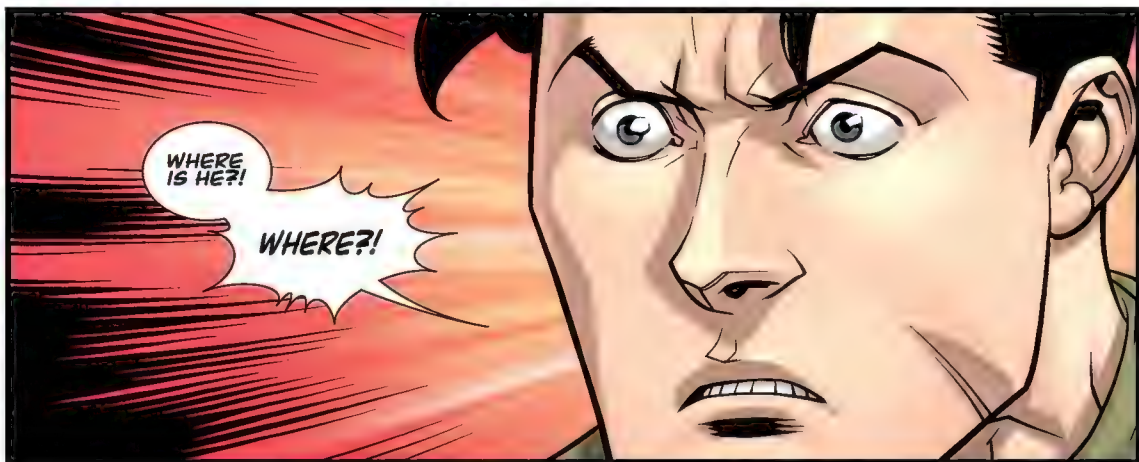
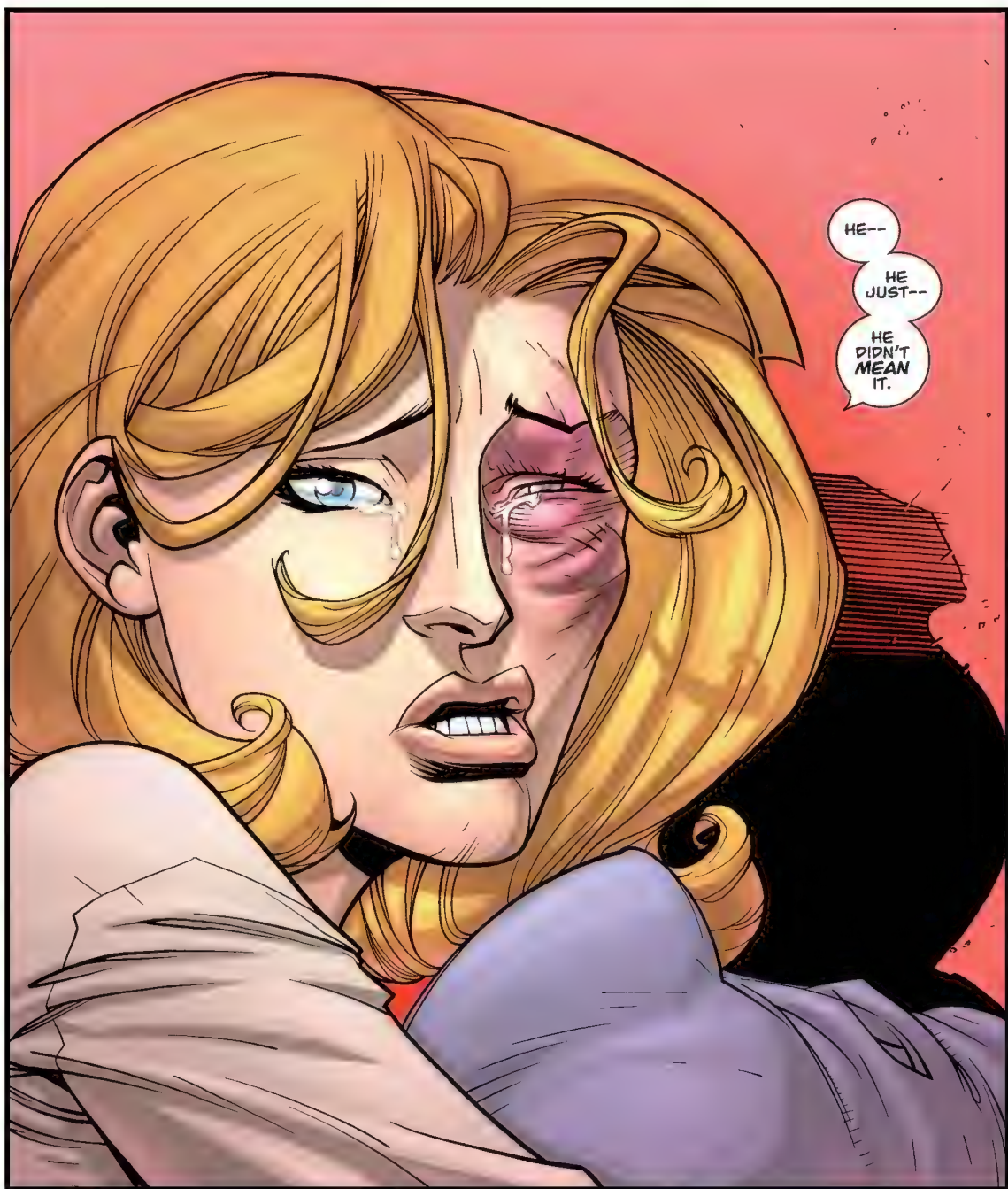


YOU SHOULD HAVE CALLED ME, I HAD NO IDEA. I FEEL HORRIBLE.

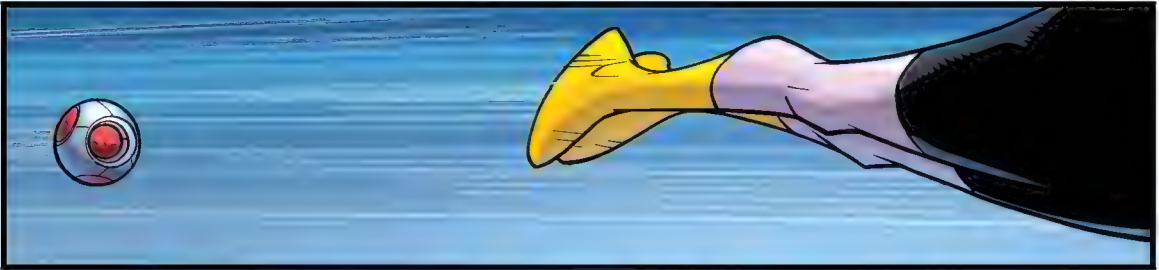
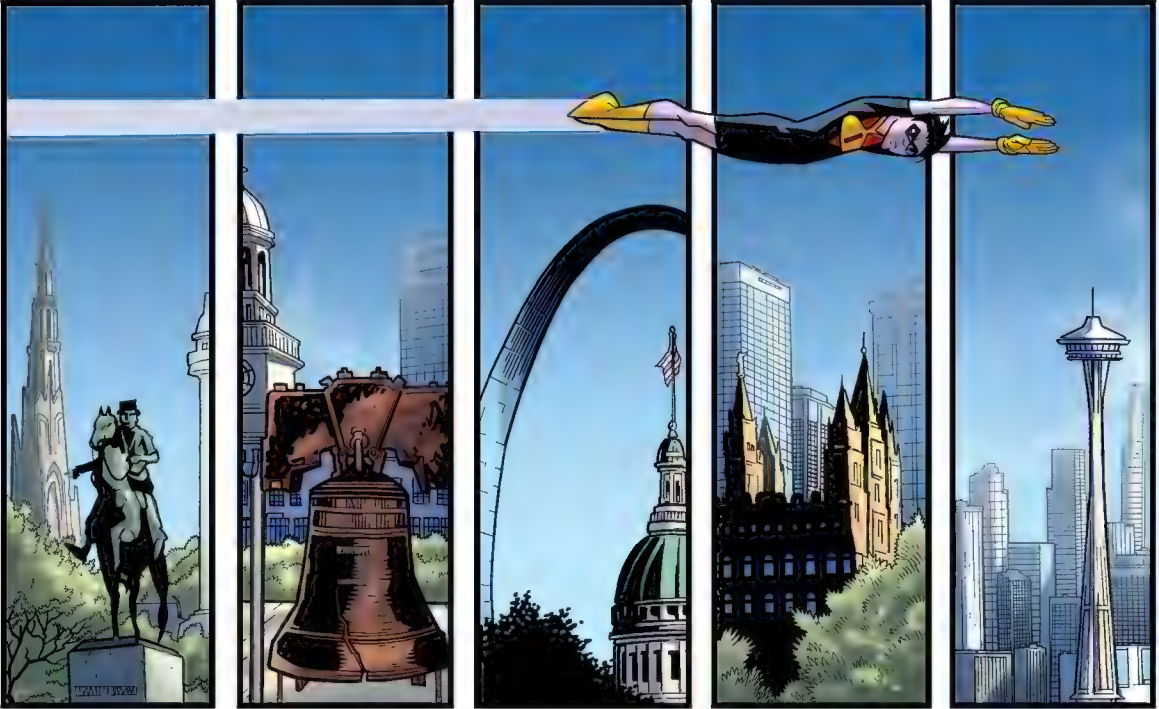
DON'T... GARY WAS VERY SUPPORTIVE. HE'S SUCH A GREAT GUY... HE'S SO UNDERSTANDING.

IT'S JUST THAT, AND I'M SORRY--I JUST DIDN'T KNOW WHO ELSE I COULD TALK TO ABOUT THIS, HE GETS ANGRY SOMETIMES...

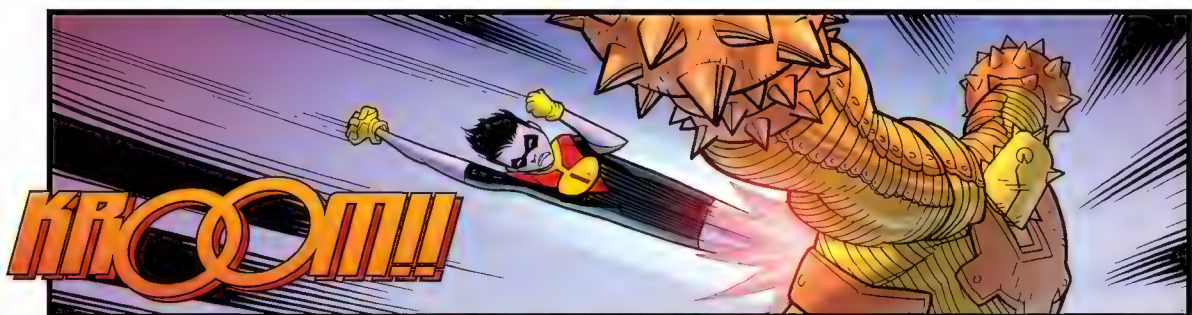












DON'T WASTE  
MY TIME! I  
NEED SOMEONE  
MUCH MORE  
POWERFUL  
THAN YOU!



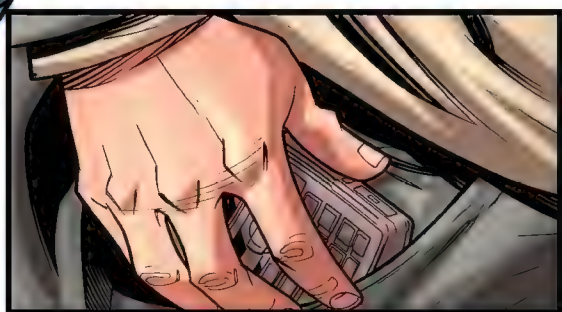
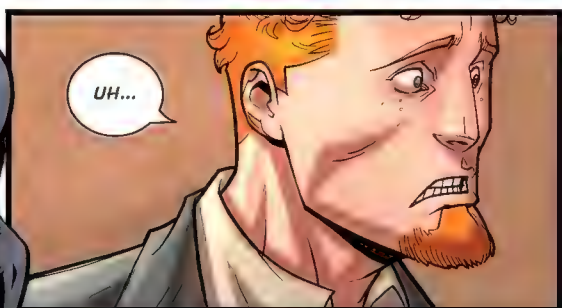
THEN MAYBE  
YOU ARE STRONG  
ENOUGH. PLEASE--  
LISTEN TO ME, I  
NEED YOUR HELP,  
I NEED SOMEONE  
STRONGER THAN  
I AM.



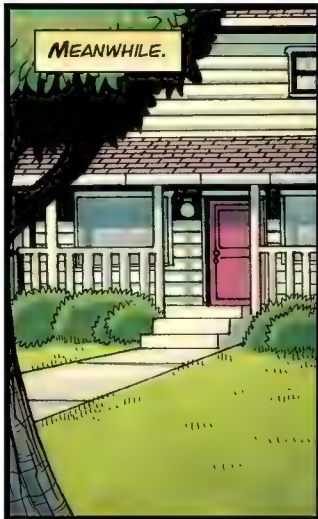








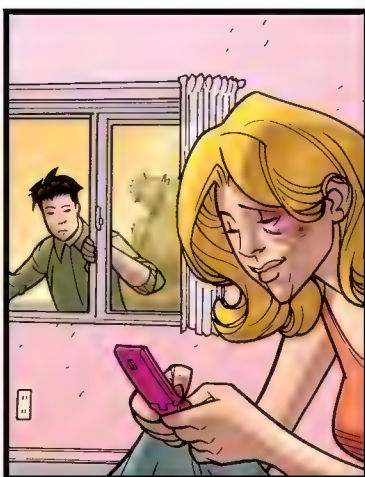






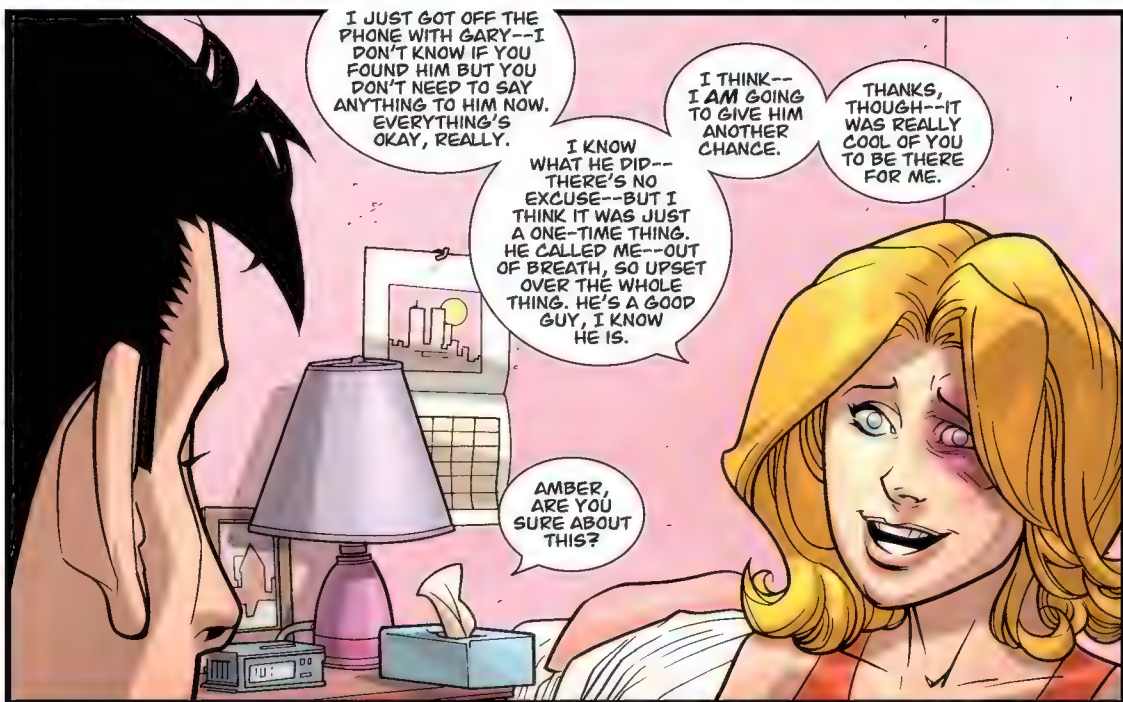






HEY.

OH, MARK!  
I'M SO GLAD  
YOU'RE  
HERE.



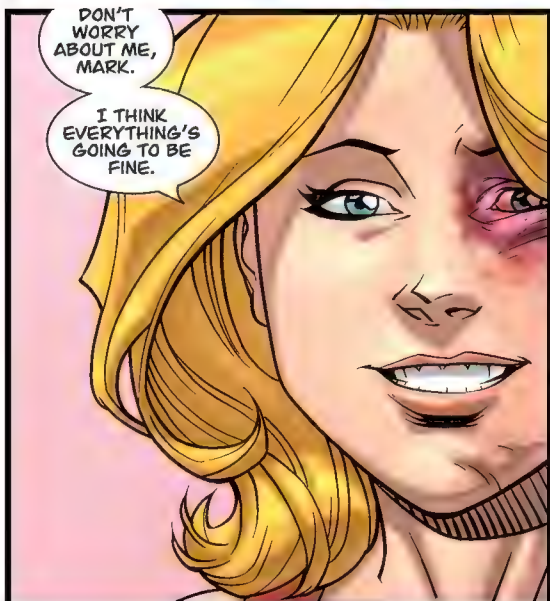
I JUST GOT OFF THE  
PHONE WITH GARY--I  
DON'T KNOW IF YOU  
FOUND HIM BUT YOU  
DON'T NEED TO SAY  
ANYTHING TO HIM NOW.  
EVERYTHING'S  
OKAY, REALLY.

I KNOW  
WHAT HE DID--  
THERE'S NO  
EXCUSE--BUT I  
THINK IT WAS JUST  
A ONE-TIME THING.  
HE CALLED ME--OUT  
OF BREATH, SO UPSET  
OVER THE WHOLE  
THING. HE'S A GOOD  
GUY, I KNOW  
HE IS.

I THINK--  
I AM GOING  
TO GIVE HIM  
ANOTHER  
CHANCE.

THANKS,  
THOUGH--IT  
WAS REALLY  
COOL OF YOU  
TO BE THERE  
FOR ME.

AMBER,  
ARE YOU  
SURE ABOUT  
THIS?



DON'T  
WORRY  
ABOUT ME,  
MARK.

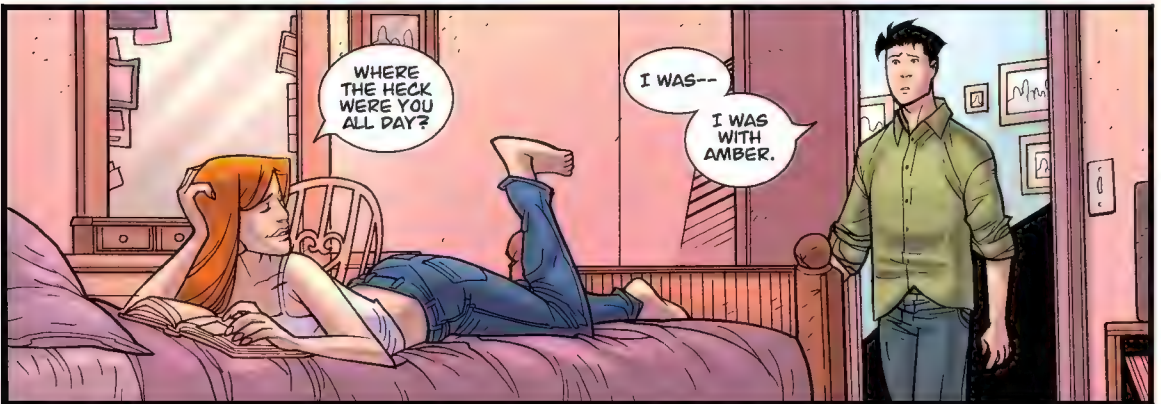
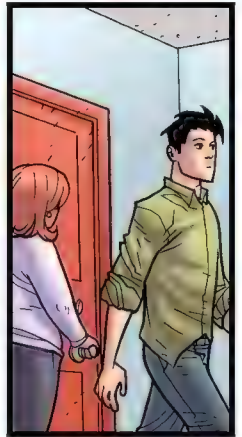
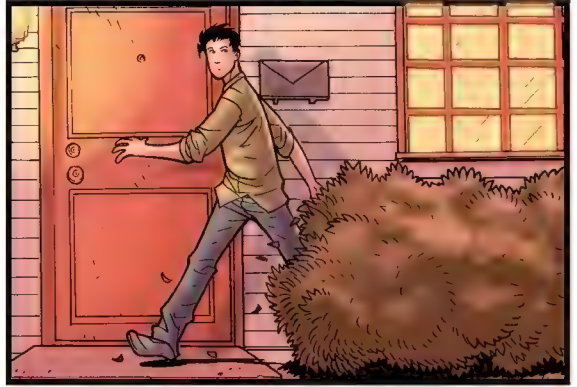
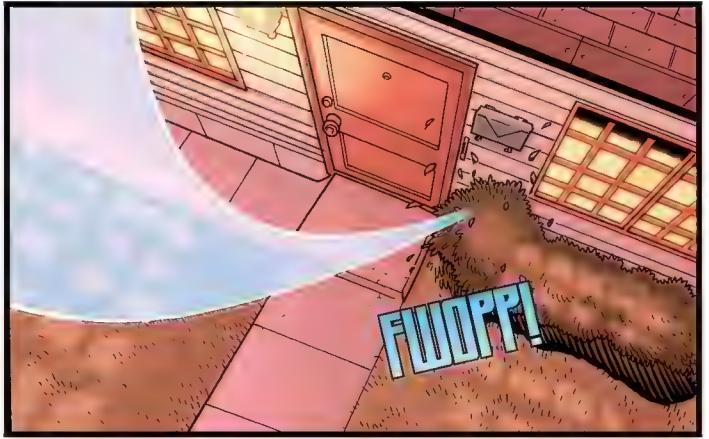
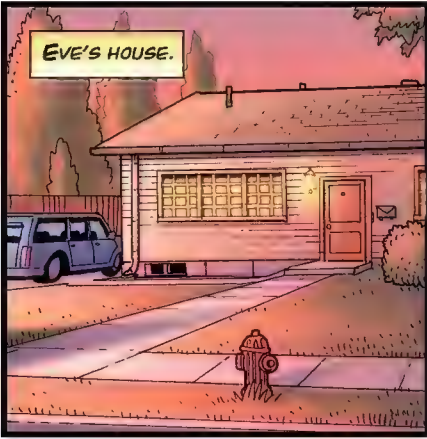
I THINK  
EVERYTHING'S  
GOING TO BE  
FINE.



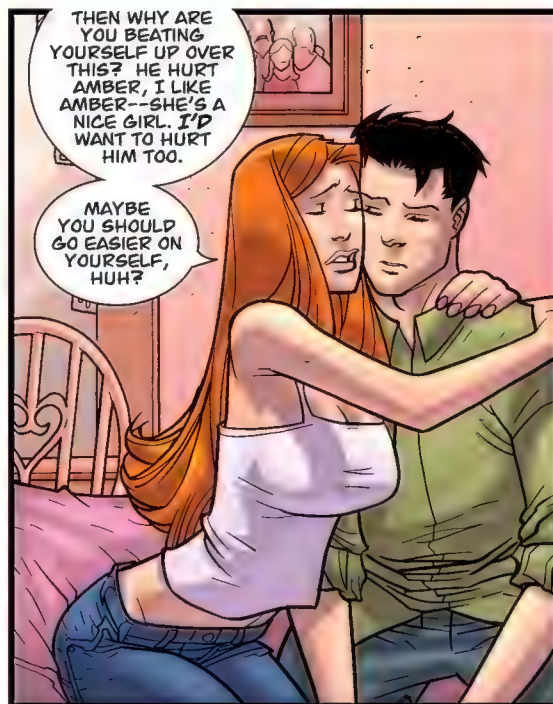
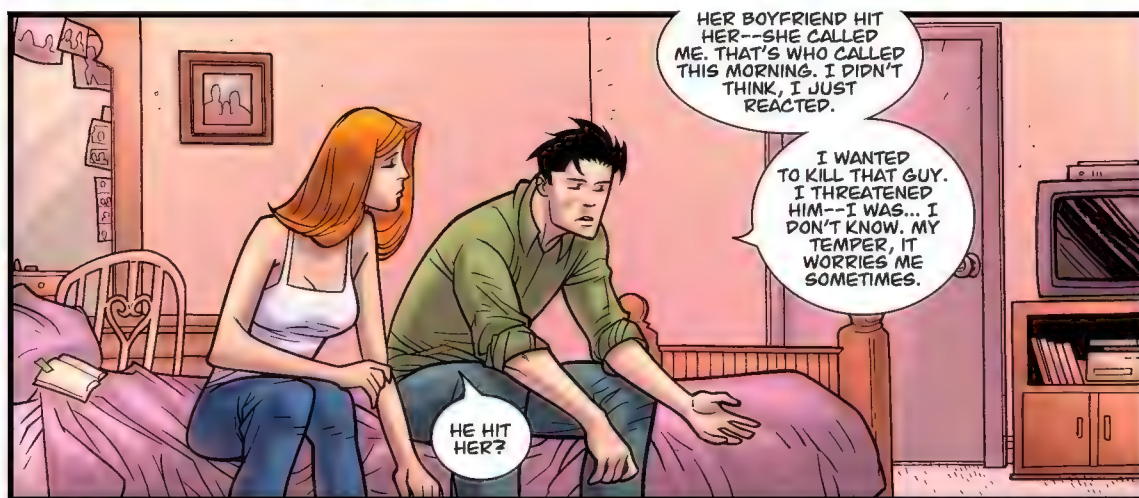
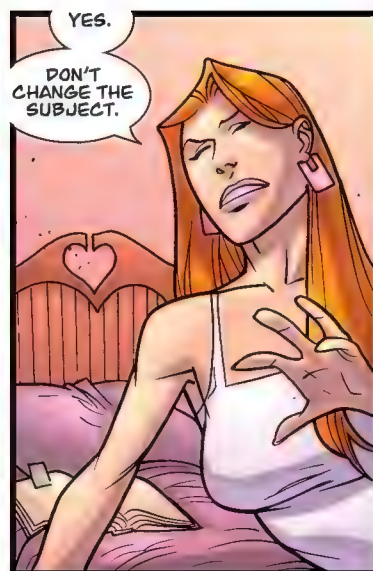
OKAY,  
JUST--

OKAY.

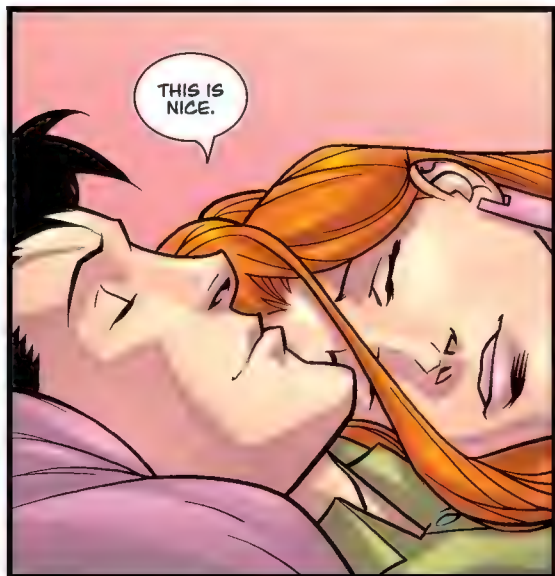
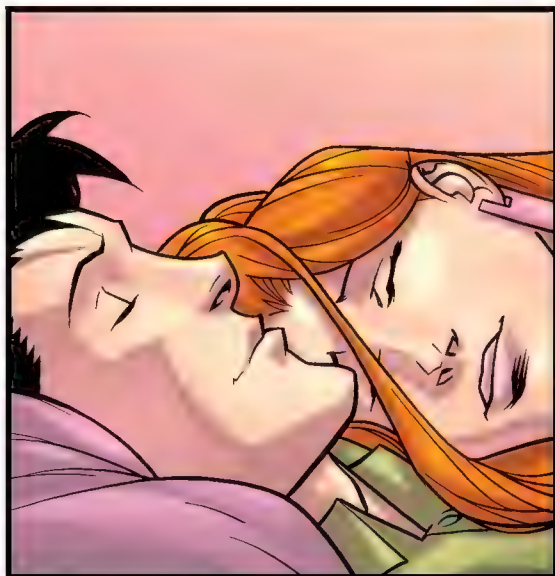
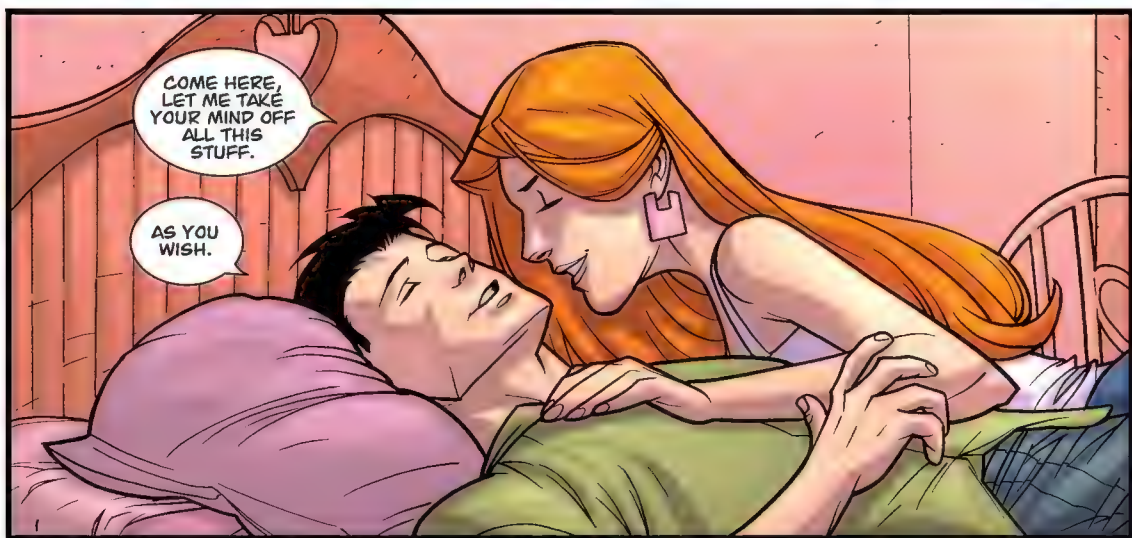
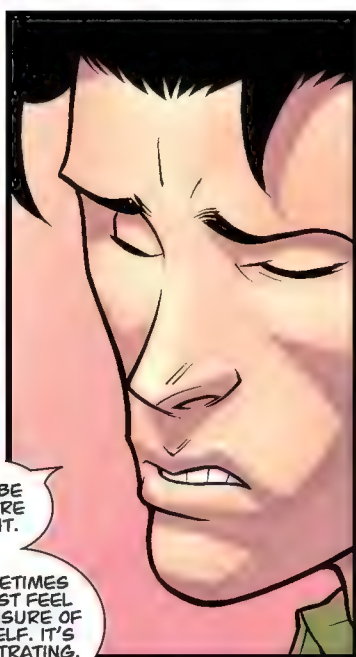
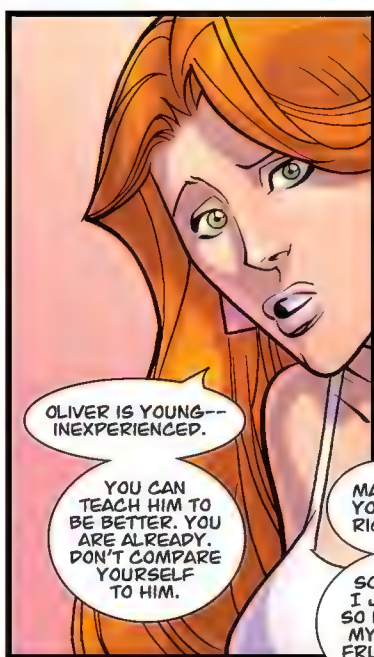




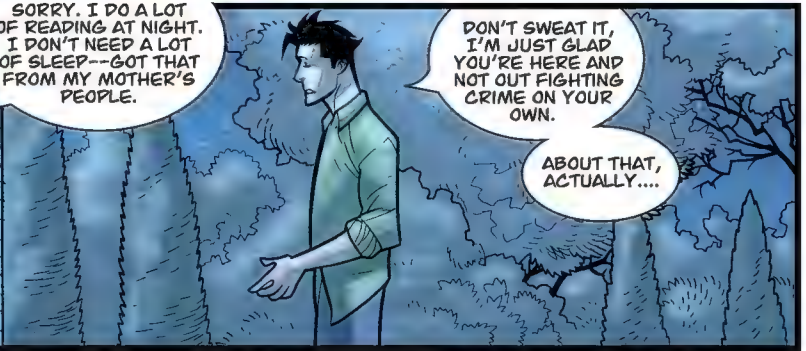
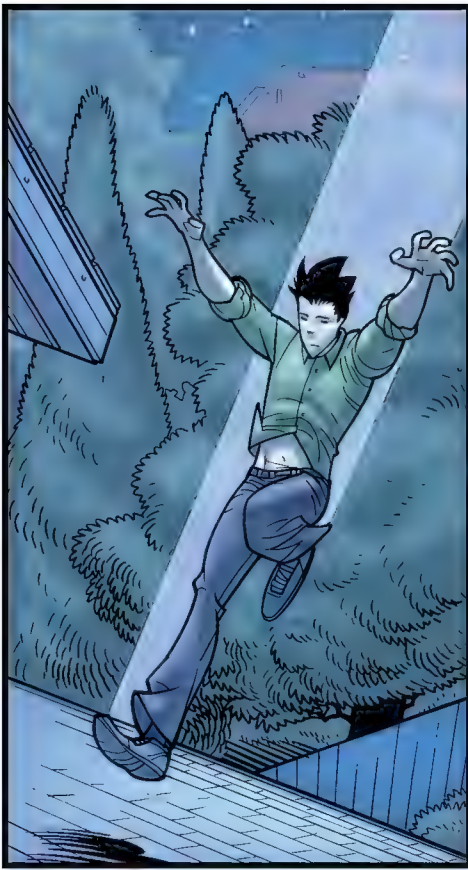






















# CHAPTER 57







THE SECRET  
BASE OF THE  
TEAM FORMERLY  
KNOWN AS THE  
TEEN TEAM.



WE'VE BEEN  
HERE ALMOST  
ALL DAY. HOW  
MUCH LONGER  
IS THIS GOING  
TO TAKE?

YEAH, ROBOT,  
REALLY... WOULD  
IT SPEED THINGS  
UP IF YOU--I  
DON'T KNOW...  
HELPED...  
YOURSELF?



I ASSURE YOU, SPLITTING  
MY FOCUS LIKE THIS DOESN'T  
SLOW ME DOWN. IN FACT, I'M  
ANALYZING THAT PROBE YOU  
DESTROYED THROUGH A  
CONSTRUCT BECAUSE IT  
ALLOWS ME TO BE MUCH  
MORE PRECISE.

I'D REALLY  
JUST SLOW  
MYSELF DOWN  
IF I TRIED TO  
HELP.

OKAY, OKAY...  
JUST DO WHAT  
YOU CAN. I REALLY  
APPRECIATE YOU  
DOING THIS  
FOR US.

BUT  
I DIDN'T  
DESTROY IT. I  
TOLD YOU--IT  
JUST BLEW  
UP WHEN I  
TOUCHED IT.





I SHOULD BE DONE SOON-- I'LL LET YOU KNOW WHEN I AM.



MAN, THAT'S JUST UNSETTLING.



SORRY, FORCE OF HABIT.



CAN I JUMP IN AFTER THIS ROUND?

THINGS WORKING OUT OKAY FOR YOU GUYS SINCE YOU SPLIT AWAY?

HUH?



OH, YEAH--THINGS ARE GOING WELL. WE'RE FIGHTING THE GOOD FIGHT. WE'VE PUT A FEW SUPER-BADS AWAY.

TOOK DOWN THE ELEPHANT LAST NIGHT-- GUY'S A LOT TOUGHER THAN HE LOOKS. YOU REMEMBER HIM?



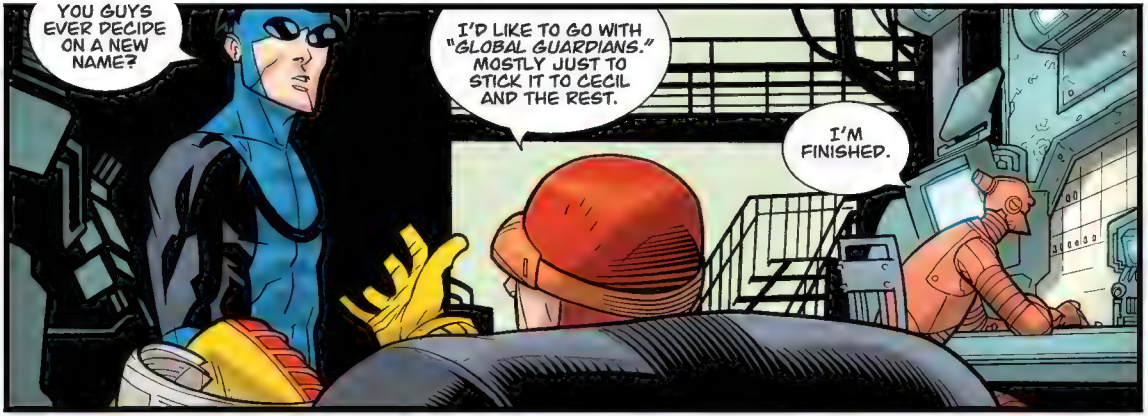
THE ELEPHANT? BARELY--IT GETS HARD TO KEEP TRACK AFTER A WHILE.



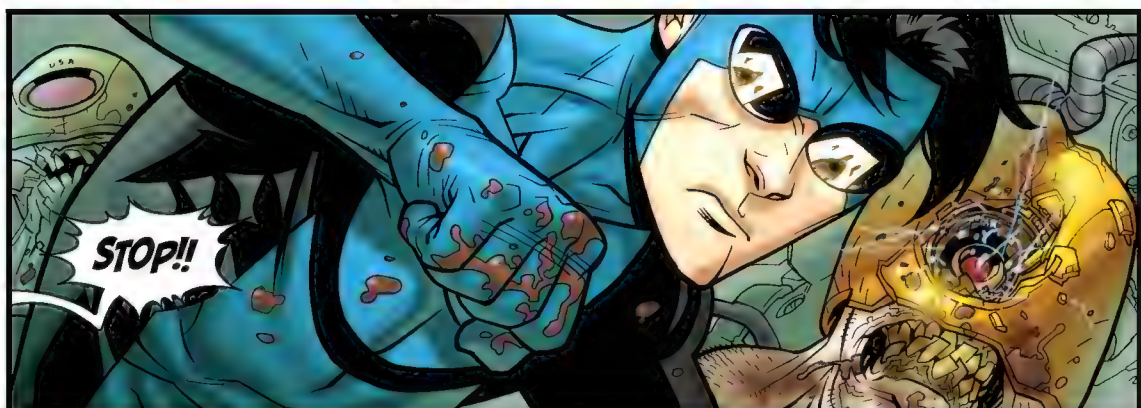
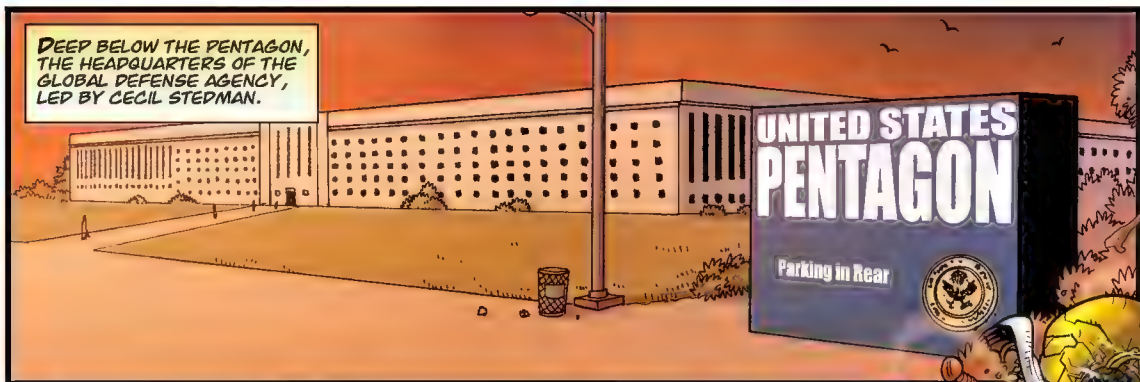
WELL, HE REMEMBERS YOU. APPARENTLY HE WAS HUNTING YOU DOWN OR SOMETHING--GUY TOTALLY HATES YOUR GUTS. I'M SURE YOU'VE RACKED UP A FEW GUYS WHO HATE YOU BY NOW.

YOU SHOULD PROBABLY WATCH OUT.

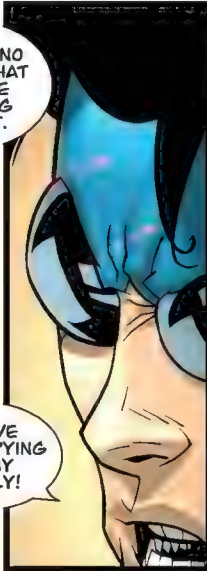














SOMEWHERE ELSE.

YOU SURVIVED--  
GOOD. THAT'S  
ANOTHER OF MY  
TESTS YOU'VE  
SURVIVED.  
IMPRESSIVE.

IT WASN'T  
EASY... BUT I  
MADE IT. WHAT'S  
NEXT? I CAN  
HARDLY WAIT TO  
SEE WHAT YOU  
HAVE PLANNED  
FOR ME  
NOW.

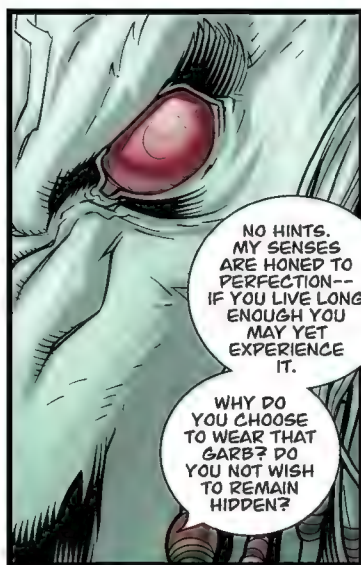
TONIGHT YOUR TEST  
WILL NOT COME FROM  
ME... THERE ARE  
OTHERS WHO CONTROL  
YOUR FATE THIS  
EVENING.

OTHERS?  
WHAT DO YOU  
MEAN?

I CAN SENSE IT.  
THERE ARE MANY  
DANGERS IN  
THE FOREST  
TONIGHT.

**RUNNABLE!!**









NO WAY!  
ARE YOU  
KIDDING  
ME?!

OF COURSE  
NOT--WHY IN THE  
WORLD WOULD I  
HELP YOU? I DON'T  
WORK FOR YOU, CECIL--  
I DON'T LIKE YOU.



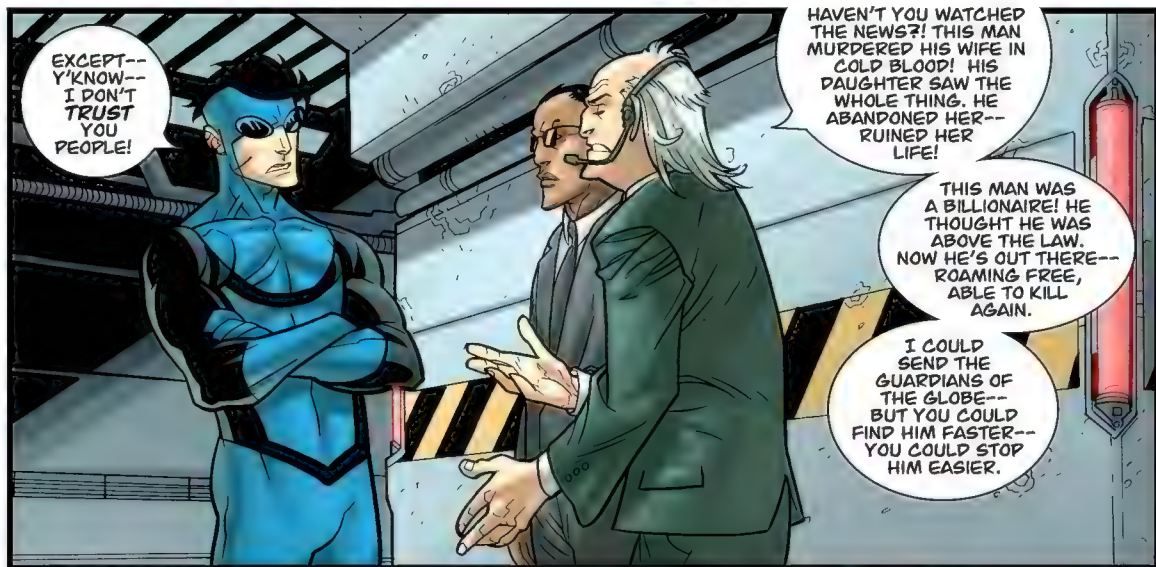
GET REAL HERE, KID.  
YOU THINK FOR A MINUTE  
YOU'LL BE ABLE TO SLEEP  
TONIGHT KNOWING THIS  
GUY IS OUT THERE--  
KNOWING WHAT  
HE DID?

I KNOW  
YOU TOO  
WELL.



LOOK, KID--  
YOU THINK WE  
WANT TO ASK  
FOR THIS? I  
TRIED TO TAKE  
THIS GUY  
OUT--AND I  
FAILED.

HE'S TOUGH--  
BUT YOU COULD  
PROBABLY GET  
THIS GUY FOR US  
IN AN AFTERNOON.



EXCEPT--  
Y'KNOW--  
I DON'T  
TRUST  
YOU  
PEOPLE!

HAVEN'T YOU WATCHED  
THE NEWS? THIS MAN  
MURDERED HIS WIFE IN  
COLD BLOOD! HIS  
DAUGHTER SAW THE  
WHOLE THING. HE  
ABANDONED HER--  
RUINED HER  
LIFE!

THIS MAN WAS  
A BILLIONAIRE! HE  
THOUGHT HE WAS  
ABOVE THE LAW.  
NOW HE'S OUT THERE--  
ROAMING FREE,  
ABLE TO KILL  
AGAIN.

I COULD  
SEND THE  
GUARDIANS OF  
THE GLOBE--  
BUT YOU COULD  
FIND HIM FASTER--  
YOU COULD STOP  
HIM EASIER.



JUST HELP  
ME THIS  
ONCE--IF YOU  
DO, I'LL HAVE  
MY PEOPLE  
LOOK OVER THIS  
ORB YOU THINK  
I WAS SPYING  
ON YOU WITH--  
SEE IF WE CAN'T  
FIND OUT WHO'S  
WATCHING  
YOU, AND WHY.

DEAL?



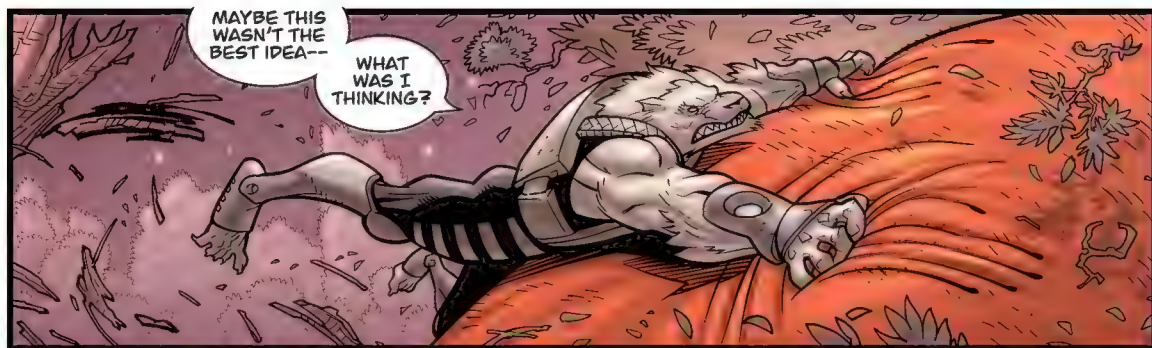
I DON'T THINK YOU HAVE  
ANYONE SMARTER THAN  
ROBOT ON STAFF--SO  
THAT OFFER DOESN'T  
MEAN MUCH.



CRAP--WE'VE GOT  
A PROBLEM. THE GIANT  
HAS ESCAPED AND  
IS ON A RAMPAGE--HE'S  
TEARING THROUGH--  
WELL--THE EXACT SAME  
REGION WOLF-MAN  
WAS LAST SEEN.

TWO BIRDS  
WITH ONE  
STONE?









COULD  
HAVE GONE  
THE REST OF MY  
LIFE WITHOUT  
FIGHTING  
THIS GUY  
AGAIN.



WIPAKOON



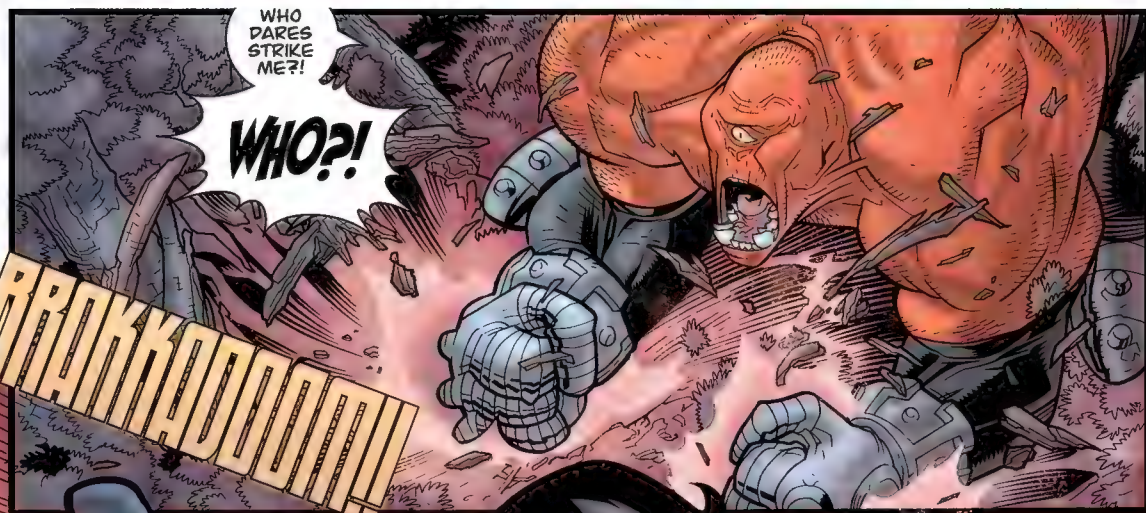
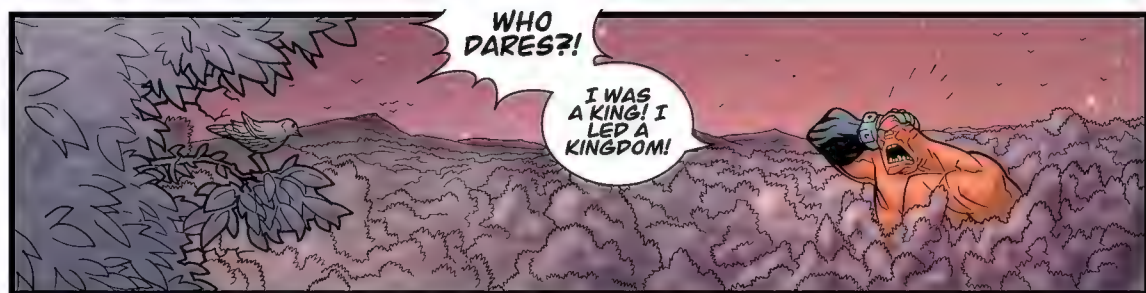
I'VE GOT YOU--  
WHAT'S THE  
SITUATION  
HERE?

SEEMS  
THIS GUY'S  
ON HIS WAY  
SOMEWHERE--  
HE DOESN'T  
MAKE A  
WHOLE LOT  
OF SENSE.

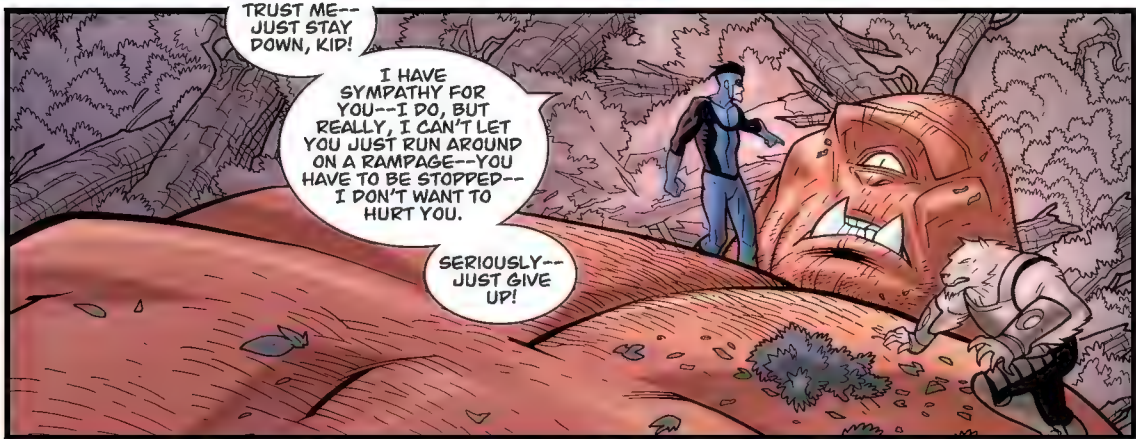
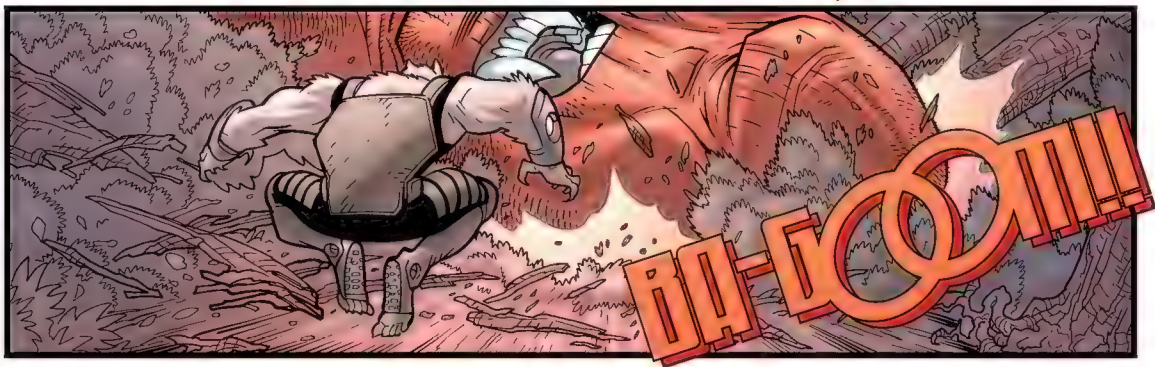
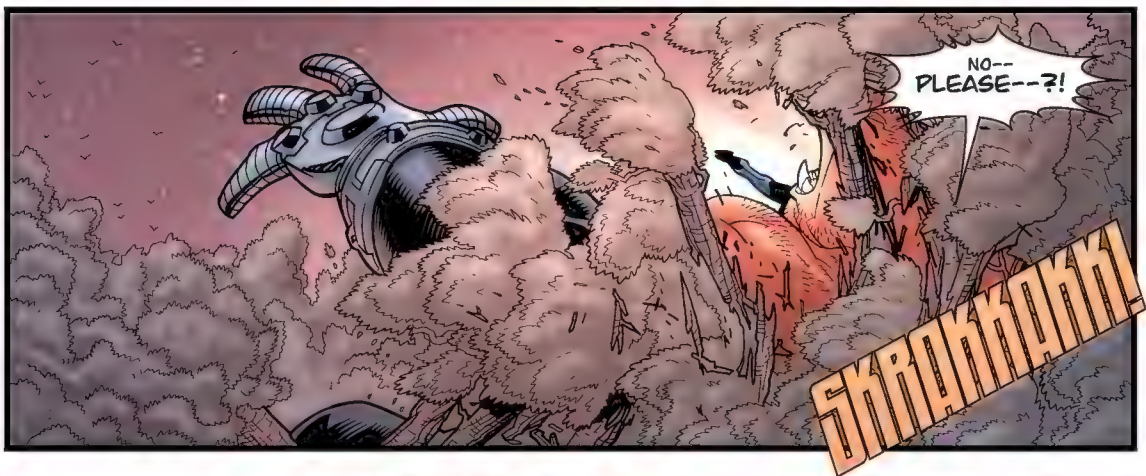
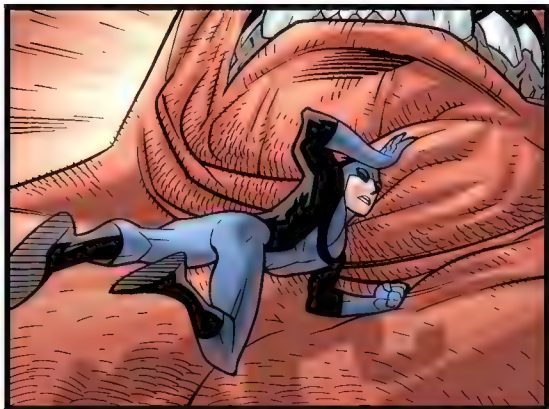
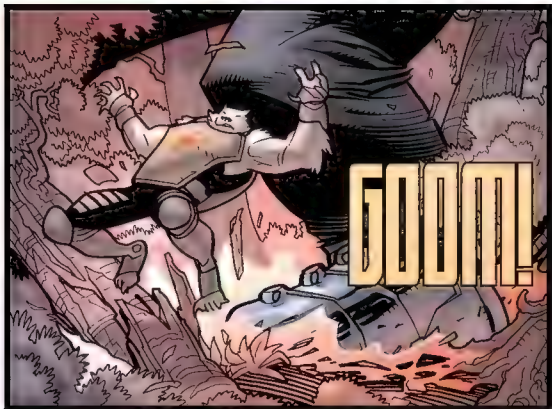
I KNOW  
A LITTLE  
ABOUT HIM...  
NOT MUCH.

I DON'T  
KNOW IF HE'S  
KILLED ANYONE--  
HE TRAMPLED A  
FEW TRUCKS--  
HE'S BAD NEWS,  
I WAS TRYING  
TO STOP HIM.

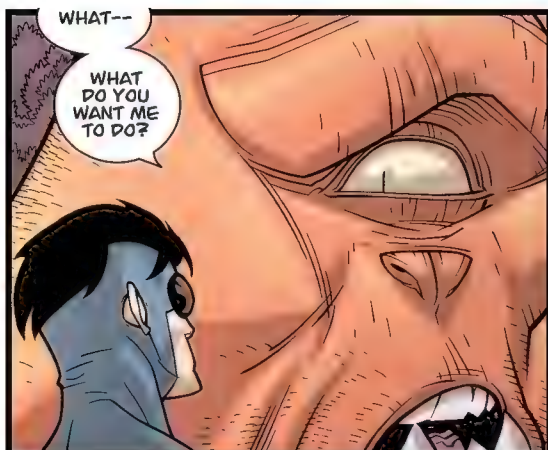












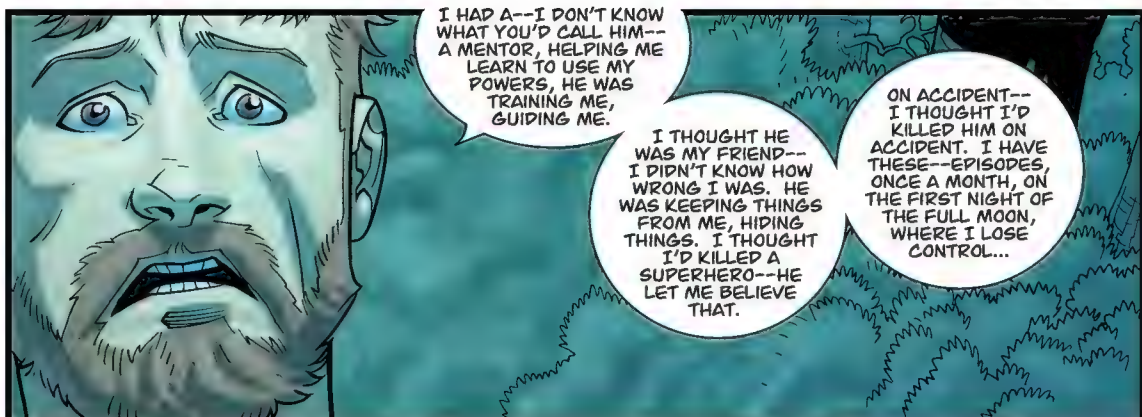












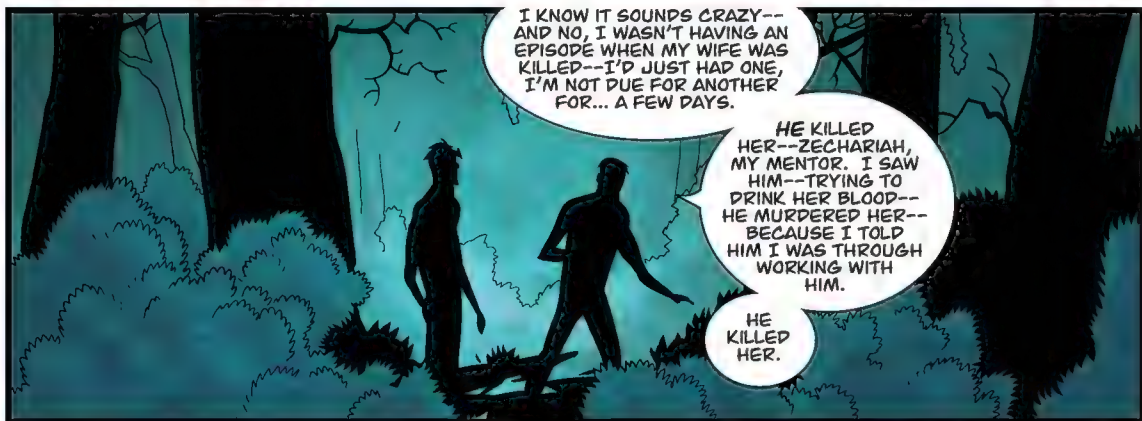
I HAD A--I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'D CALL HIM-- A MENTOR, HELPING ME LEARN TO USE MY POWERS, HE WAS TRAINING ME, GUIDING ME.

I THOUGHT HE WAS MY FRIEND-- I DIDN'T KNOW HOW WRONG I WAS. HE WAS KEEPING THINGS FROM ME, HIDING THINGS. I THOUGHT I'D KILLED A SUPERHERO--HE LET ME BELIEVE THAT.

ON ACCIDENT-- I THOUGHT I'D KILLED HIM ON ACCIDENT. I HAVE THESE--EPISODES, ONCE A MONTH, ON THE FIRST NIGHT OF THE FULL MOON, WHERE I LOSE CONTROL...



I'M LISTENING...



I KNOW IT SOUNDS CRAZY-- AND NO, I WASN'T HAVING AN EPISODE WHEN MY WIFE WAS KILLED--I'D JUST HAD ONE, I'M NOT DUE FOR ANOTHER FOR... A FEW DAYS.

HE KILLED HER--ZECHARIAH, MY MENTOR. I SAW HIM--TRYING TO DRINK HER BLOOD-- HE MURDERED HER-- BECAUSE I TOLD HIM I WAS THROUGH WORKING WITH HIM.

HE KILLED HER.



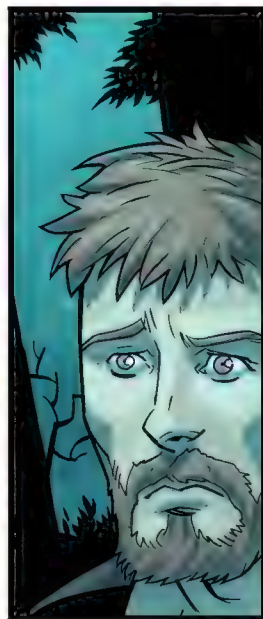
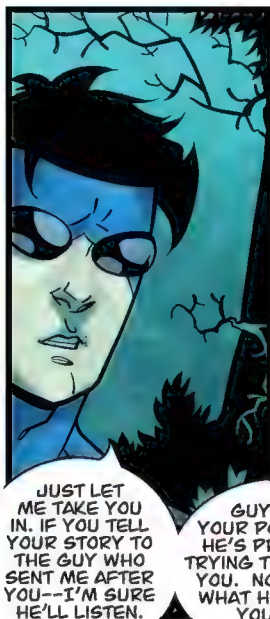
HE KILLED HER.



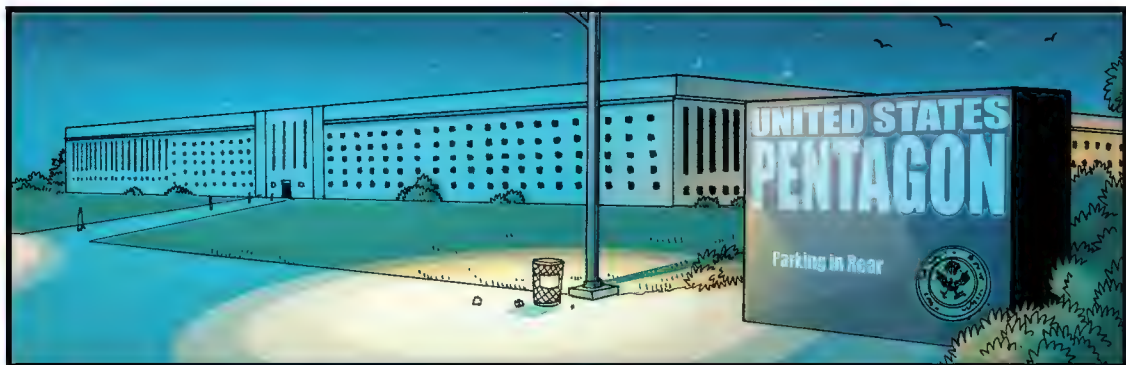
HE KILLED MY WIFE.

SHE'S DEAD.







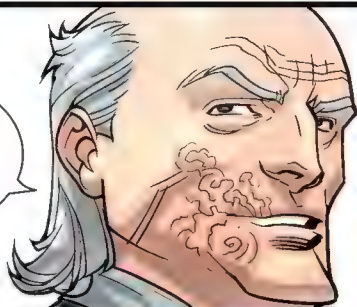


BRAVO, KID.  
I KNEW YOU  
COULD DO  
IT.

AND--  
DO MY EYES  
DECEIVE ME--  
YOU GOT HIM  
TO DO IT--  
VOLUNTARILY?

DIDN'T  
EXPECT  
THAT, KID'S  
GOOD.

IMPRESSIVE.



THANKS,  
BUT HE'S NOT  
HERE TO TURN  
HIMSELF IN.

HE'S  
HERE TO  
TALK.



THAT  
WASN'T  
PART OF  
THE DEAL,  
KID.

HE CAN  
TALK TO HIS  
LAWYER.  
WE'RE  
ARRESTING  
HIM.



THEN I'M  
CHANGING  
THE DEAL. YOU  
CAN LISTEN TO  
WHAT HE HAS  
TO SAY--THAT  
DOESN'T HURT  
ANYTHING.







AGENT HUNTER,  
CAN YOU PLEASE  
EXCUSE US?



GOOD LUCK,  
MURDERER.



IT'S OKAY--  
JUST LET  
ME TALK TO  
HIM.

ARE YOU TELLING  
ME THAT YOU CAN  
PARDON MURDERING  
PSYCHOPATHS LIKE  
**PARKWING**--BUT  
YOU CAN'T EVEN  
HEAR HIS  
STORY?

THAT'S  
INSANE.



NOTHING I CAN  
DO HERE, KID. HIS  
STORY'S TOO PUBLIC.  
THERE'S NO WAY I  
CAN HAVE HIM RUNNING  
AROUND IN THE CLEAR.  
EVERYONE KNOWS WHO  
GARY HAMPTON IS--  
THE WEREWOLF  
SUPERHERO WIFE-  
KILLER.

IT'S NOT  
LIKE HE COULD  
GO BY ANOTHER  
NAME OR ANYTHING  
EITHER... THE FUR  
TENDS TO GIVE  
HIM AWAY.

NO, SADLY--  
HE'S USELESS TO  
ME. I'VE GOT TO  
BE PRACTICAL HERE,  
INVINCIBLE. IF HE'S  
GOT A STORY TO  
TELL--HE CAN  
TELL IT TO A  
JURY.



THIS GUY  
ISN'T A KILLER--  
I ARRIVED TO  
SEE HIM RISKING  
HIS LIFE TRYING  
TO SAVE PEOPLE  
FROM THE GIANT--  
TRUST ME--HE'S  
ONE OF THE  
GOOD GUYS.

I'M NOT  
LETTING YOU  
ARREST HIM!



I KNOW  
YOU TOO  
WELL.

DIDN'T  
YOU WONDER  
WHY I HAD  
YOU MEET ME  
IN THE WHITE  
ROOM?





OH,  
GREAT.

THIS  
AGAIN.





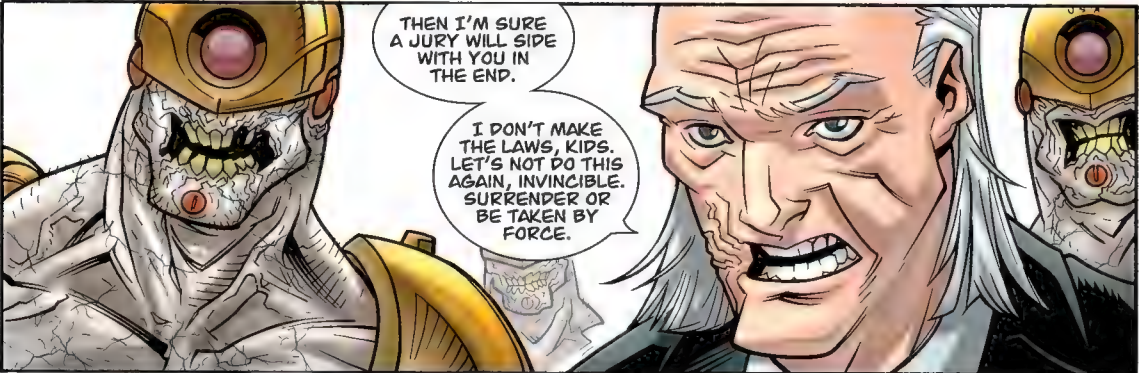
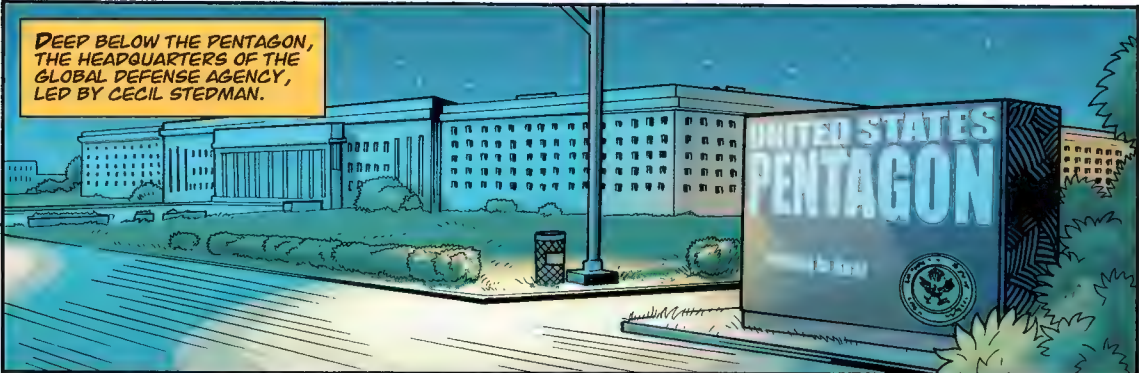


# ASTOUNDING WOLF-MAN

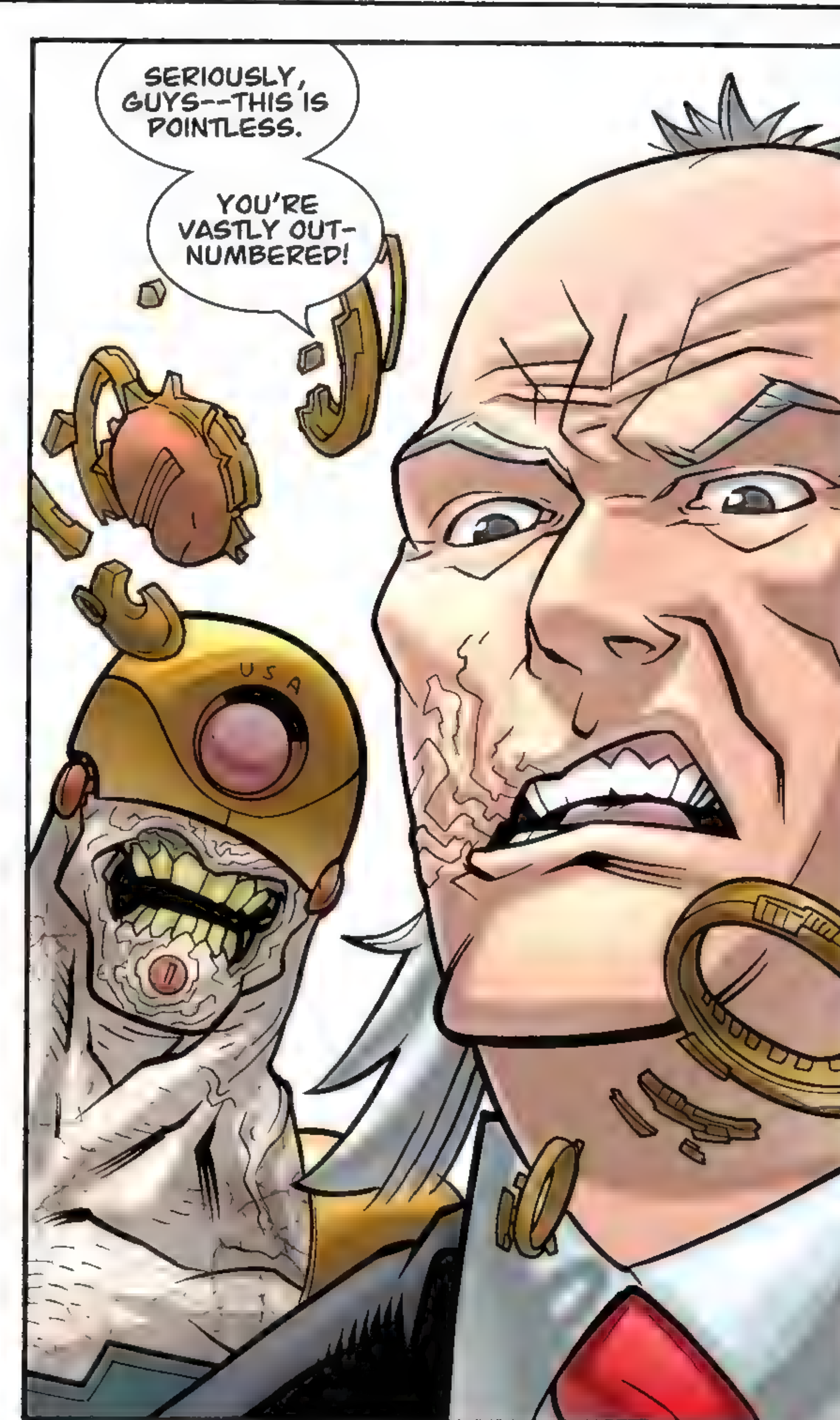
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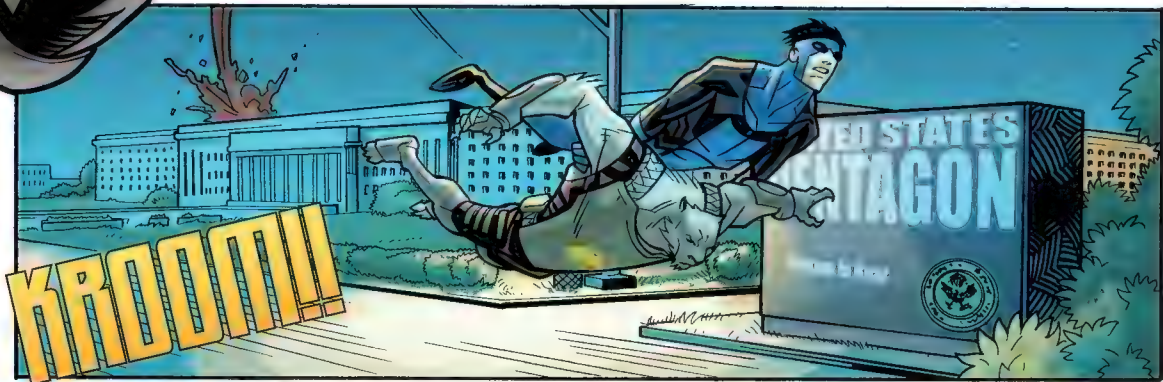








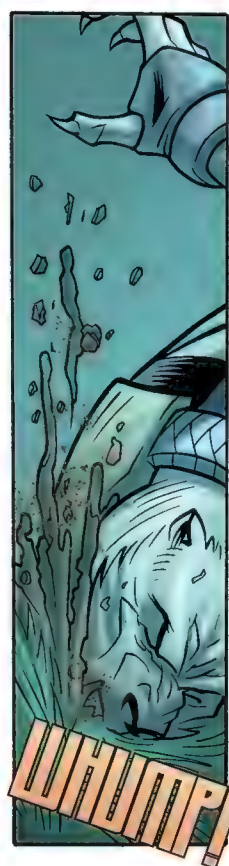
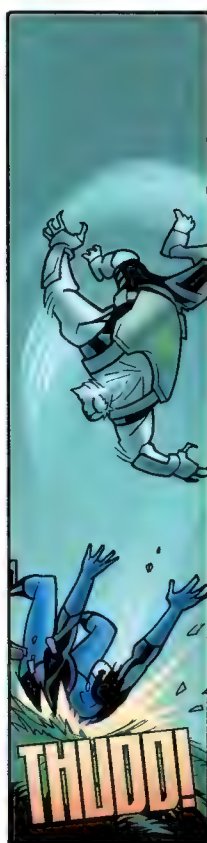
THE  
WAY--IS  
UP!



THIS IS  
UNCOMFORTABLE.

I GET  
THAT A  
LOT.









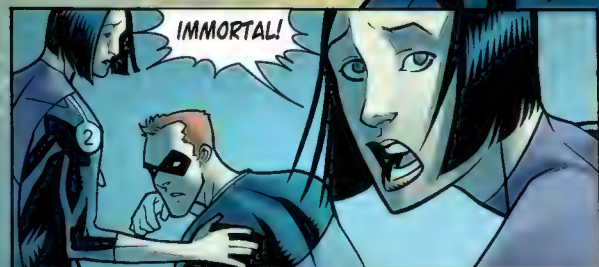








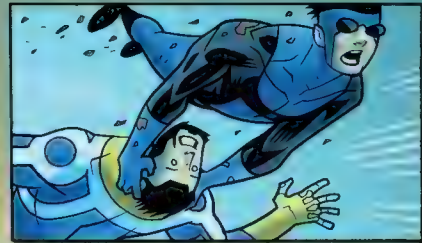
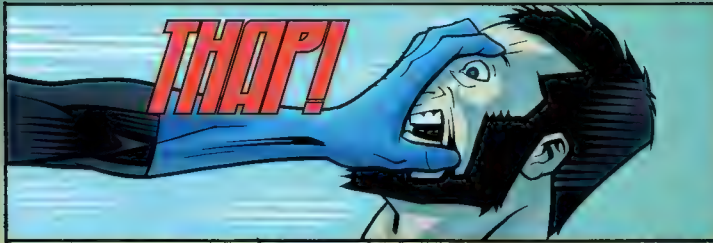




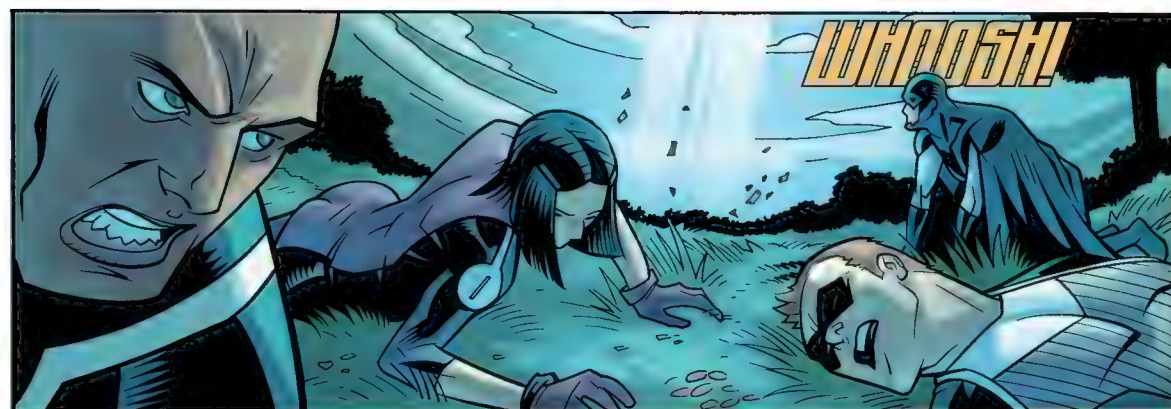
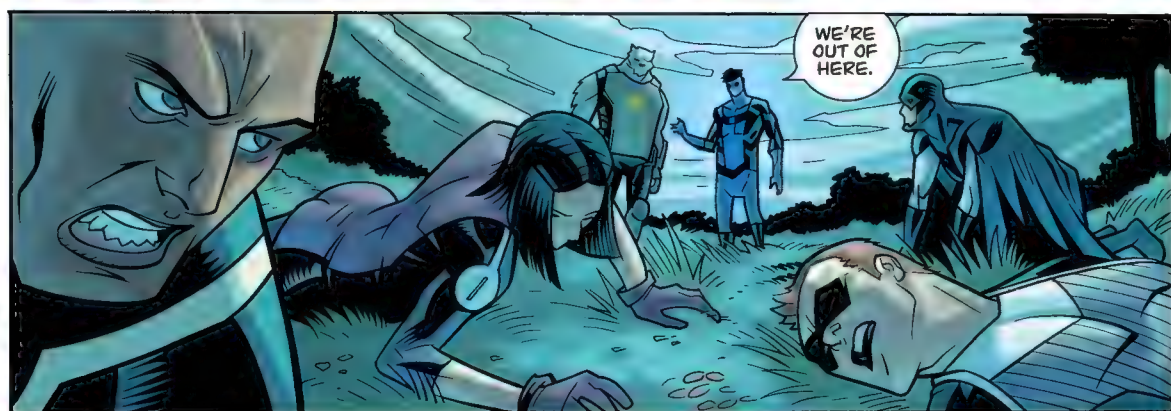
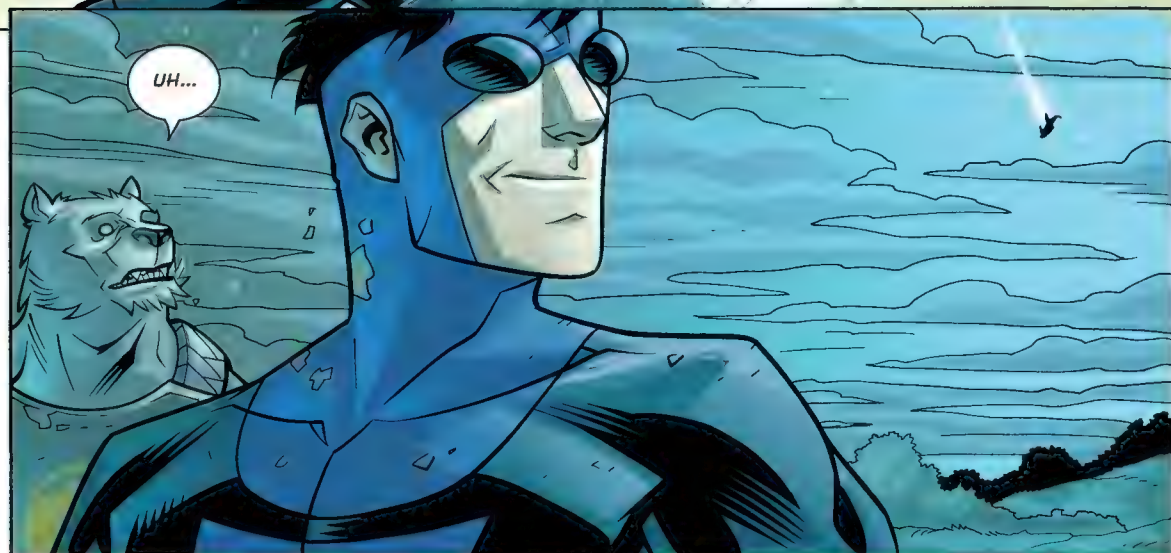
















COOL.  
I THINK  
WE LOST  
THEM.

GREAT.



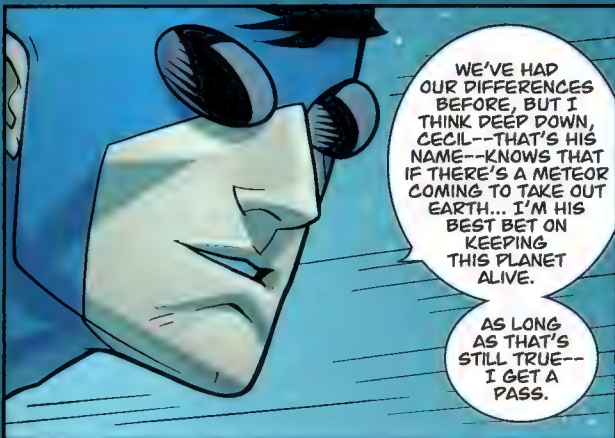
THAT TOTALLY  
DID NOT WORK  
OUT THE WAY I  
THOUGHT IT  
WOULD.

I'M  
REALLY  
SORRY  
ABOUT  
THAT.



YOU  
COULDN'T  
HAVE PLANNED  
FOR THAT--DON'T  
WORRY ABOUT IT.  
I JUST HOPE I  
DIDN'T GET YOU IN  
TROUBLE WITH  
SCAR FACE  
BACK  
THERE.

I DON'T  
WANT THEM  
HUNTING  
YOU DOWN  
BECAUSE  
OF ME.



WE'VE HAD  
OUR DIFFERENCES  
BEFORE, BUT I  
THINK DEEP DOWN,  
CECIL--THAT'S HIS  
NAME--KNOWS THAT  
IF THERE'S A METEOR  
COMING TO TAKE OUT  
EARTH... I'M HIS  
BEST BET ON  
KEEPING  
THIS PLANET  
ALIVE.

AS LONG  
AS THAT'S  
STILL TRUE--  
I GET A  
PASS.



STILL,  
THANKS FOR  
STICKING YOUR  
NECK OUT FOR  
ME--MEANS  
A LOT.



DON'T  
MENTION  
IT.

...

SO...  
WHERE  
TO?



THE HAMPTON ESTATE.



WHEN SHE SAW ME HOLDING MY WIFE'S BODY... I KNEW--

I KNEW SHE THOUGHT I'D KILLED HER.



I DIED MYSELF, THAT VERY INSTANT... MY LIFE WAS OVER.

GETTING CAUGHT--WHAT THOSE PEOPLE WILL DO TO ME-- NONE OF THAT SCARES ME. THAT'S NOT WHY I RAN. I NEED TIME TO SET THINGS STRAIGHT...

...TO SHOW HER SHE STILL HAS A FATHER.



AND HE'S STILL OUT THERE--THE MAN WHO DID KILL YOUR WIFE?



SOMEWHERE, YEAH. I DON'T KNOW WHERE.

I NEVER KNEW WHERE HE WENT WHEN WE WEREN'T WORKING TOGETHER--HE ALWAYS FOUND ME.



HE'S STILL OUT THERE.

ZECHARIAH--





YOU  
TRIPPED  
THE SILENT  
ALARM.

I KNOW.  
WHAT TOOK  
YOU SO  
LONG?



I SAW  
THAT IT WAS  
YOU ON THE  
SECURITY FEED.  
THOUGHT I'D  
GIVE YOU A  
MOMENT  
ALONE...

...AND I  
HAD TO FIND  
MY ROBE.

WHO'S  
YOUR  
FRIEND?



INVINCIBLE,  
THIS IS MY  
FRIEND  
DUNFORD.

NICE  
TO MEET  
YOU.



AND THE  
SAME TO  
YOU.

I SUPPOSE  
I HAVE YOU TO  
THANK FOR THIS  
VISIT. IT'S GOOD  
TO SEE YOU,  
GARY.



ARE YOU...  
OKAY?



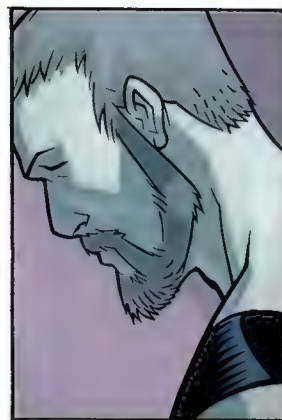






NOT WELL.  
SADLY.

NOT  
WELL AT  
ALL.



I'M TRYING TO BE  
SUPPORTIVE, I KNOW  
SHE'S GOING THROUGH  
A LOT--BUT I WAS  
NEVER CUT OUT TO BE  
A PARENT. I DON'T  
KNOW IF I'M DOING  
WHAT SHE  
NEEDS.

I'M GIVING  
HER SPACE. SHE  
DOESN'T SPEND A  
LOT OF TIME HERE.  
SHE'S STILL GOING  
TO SCHOOL, BUT  
HER GRADES ARE  
SUFFERING.

THE SCHOOL  
KNOWS THE  
SITUATION--THEY'RE  
BEING VERY  
UNDERSTANDING.

SHE'S JUST  
SO... ANGRY. SHE  
DOESN'T TALK TO ME...  
I'VE TRIED TO GET  
HER TO OPEN UP TO  
ME--BUT NOTHING  
SEEMS TO WORK. I  
DON'T KNOW WHAT  
TO DO.

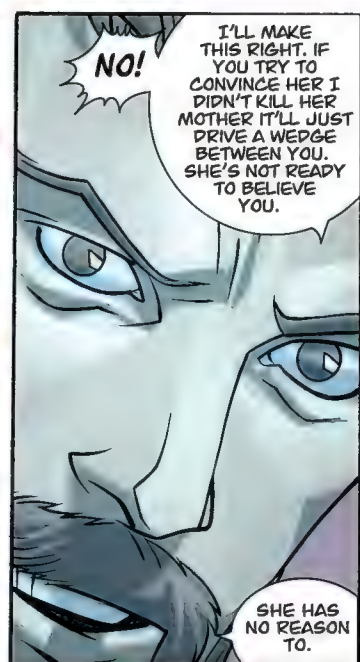


DOES  
SHE THINK  
I...?



SHE DOES.  
SHE THINKS YOU  
LOST CONTROL--  
WENT INTO A  
RAGE AND  
REBECCA...

I HAVEN'T  
TALKED TO  
HER ABOUT IT--  
MAYBE I  
SHOULD--



**NO!**

I'LL MAKE  
THIS RIGHT. IF  
YOU TRY TO  
CONVINCE HER I  
DIDN'T KILL HER  
MOTHER IT'LL JUST  
DRIVE A WEDGE  
BETWEEN YOU.  
SHE'S NOT READY  
TO BELIEVE  
YOU.

SHE HAS  
NO REASON  
TO.





I'LL GIVE HER THE REASON TO BELIEVE ME. I'LL SHOW HER THE KIND OF MAN THAT I AM--THE KIND OF MAN I'VE ALWAYS BEEN.

I JUST NEED TIME. DUNFORD, JUST GIVE ME THE TIME TO PROVE TO HER.

I'LL BRING DOWN ZECHARIAH-- EXPOSE HIM FOR WHAT HE IS--AND SHE'LL HAVE TO BELIEVE ME.

I'LL GET MY LITTLE GIRL BACK.



I'LL GIVE YOU AS MUCH TIME AS YOU NEED.

YOU CAN COUNT ON ME, GARY.



WHEN THE TIME COMES, I'LL HELP OUT IN ANY WAY I CAN.

I REALLY WISH I COULD HELP MORE. I'M VERY SORRY.



DON'T BE. YOU'VE HELPED ENOUGH. BRINGING ME HERE--TRYING TO CLEAR THINGS WITH THE GOVERNMENT.

I ALMOST HATE TO ASK, BUT I DO NEED ONE MORE THING FROM YOU.



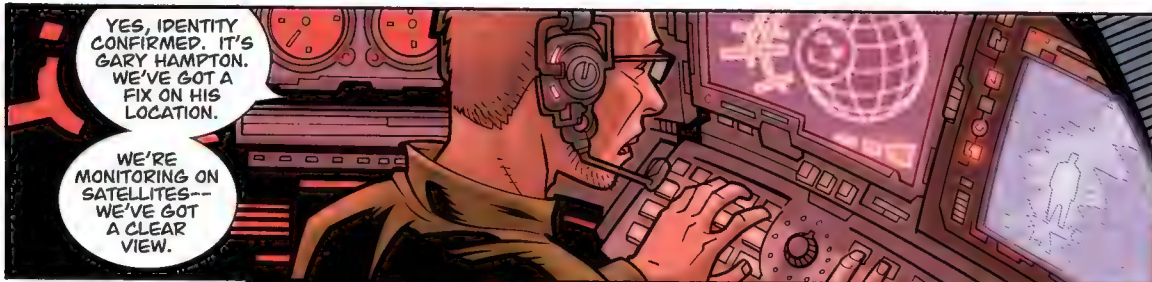
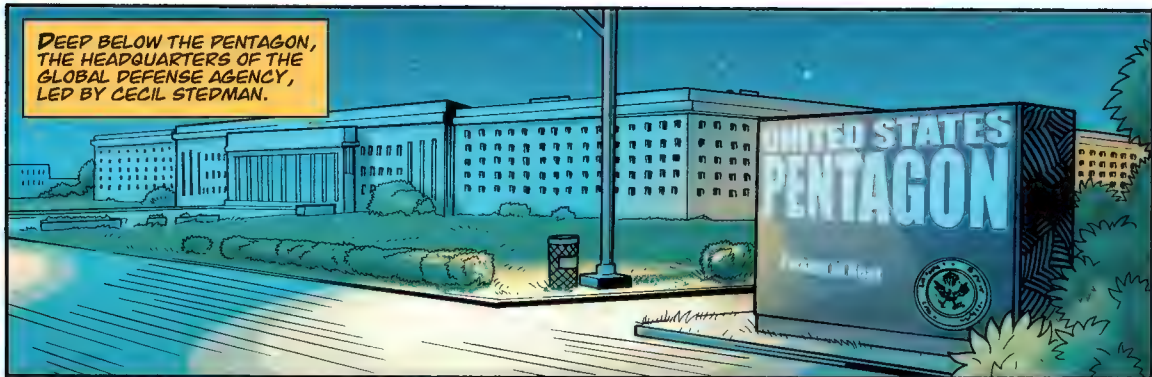
NAME IT.

I NEED YOU TO GET ME OUT OF HERE.











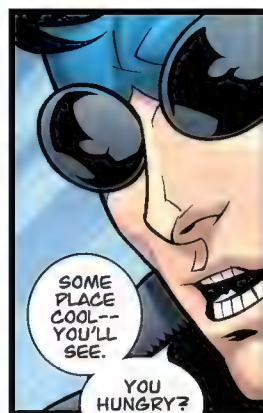




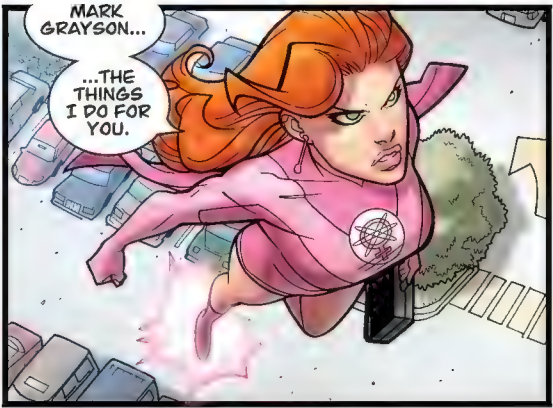
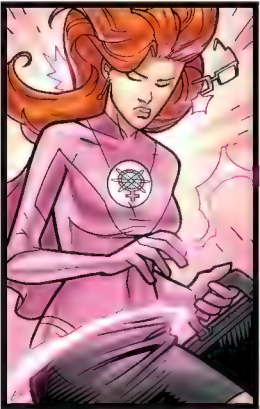
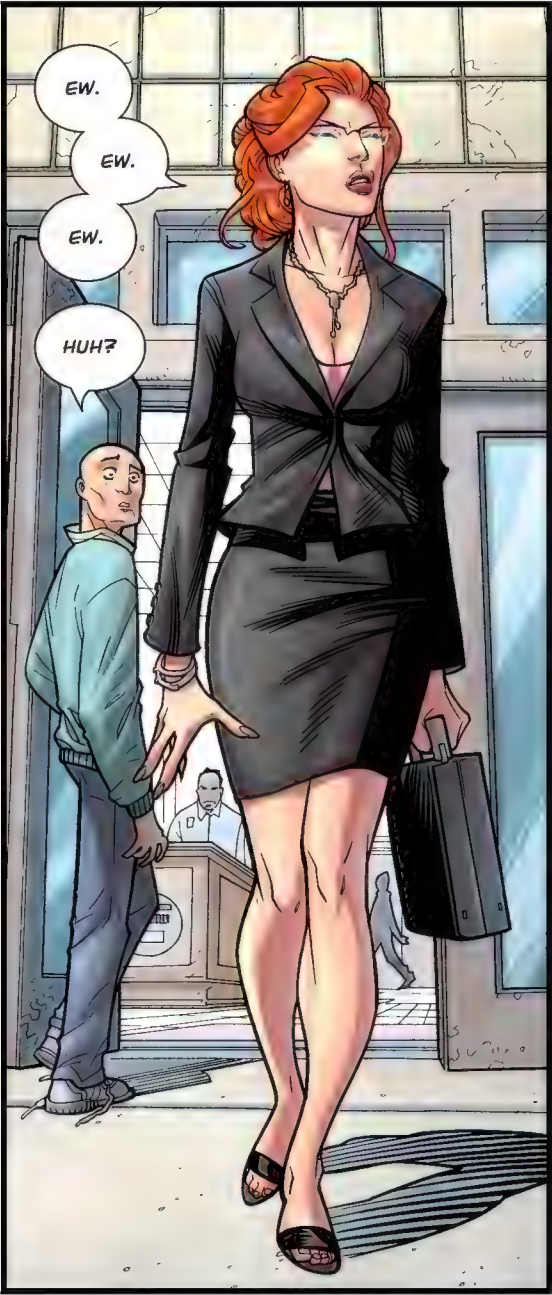
# CHAPTER 58



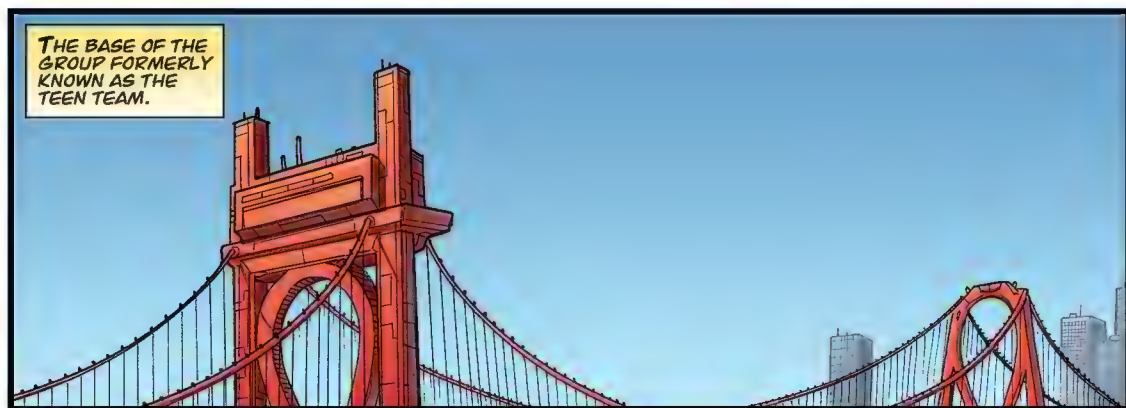












GLOBAL GUARDIANS!  
THAT'S WHAT WE SHOULD  
CALL OURSELVES.

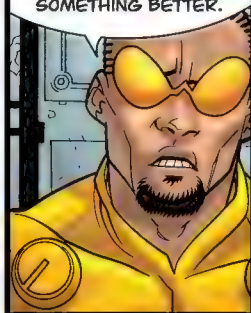


THAT MAY  
BRING US LEGAL  
ENTANGLEMENTS. BESIDES,  
WITHOUT THE SUPPORT OF  
THE GLOBAL DEFENSE  
AGENCY--OUR RANGE  
ISN'T EXACTLY GLOBAL.

OH, PLEASE.  
HOW MANY TIMES  
DID WE DO SOMETHING  
OUTSIDE OF THE COUNTRY  
WHEN WE WERE WITH THE  
GUARDIANS? TWICE?  
THREE TIMES?



I DON'T LIKE THE NAME,  
EITHER. IT SOUNDS  
**SILLY**. I THINK WE CAN  
COME UP WITH  
SOMETHING BETTER.



THEN WHY DON'T YOU  
SUGGEST SOMETHING.  
STOP CRAPPING ALL  
OVER MY IDEAS AND  
SUBMIT SOME OF  
YOUR OWN!



IS THE NAME  
OF OUR STUPID  
TEAM REALLY  
**THIS**  
IMPORTANT?!



AMANDA?  
I'M PISSED, OKAY?! WE'RE  
WORKING ON COMING UP WITH  
A NAME FOR OUR TEAM WHILE  
I'M STILL GETTING YOUNGER  
EVERY TIME I USE MY  
POWERS!



YOU SAID  
YOU'D FIX ME,  
RUDY! YOU WERE  
CONFIDENT! DAMN  
IT, I BELIEVED  
IN YOU!

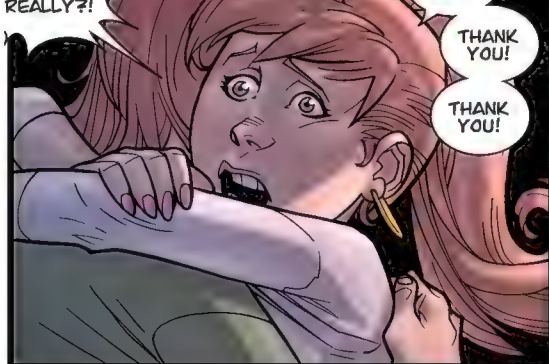


I'M SORRY, I REALLY  
AM... I HAVE BEEN  
WORKING ON YOU--I  
RECENTLY MADE A  
BREAKTHROUGH... I  
WANTED TO  
SURPRISE YOU--

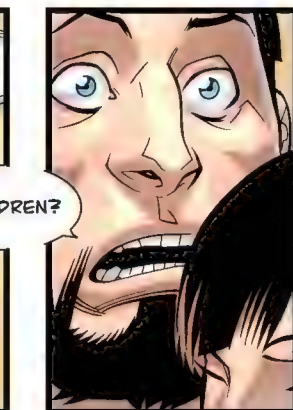
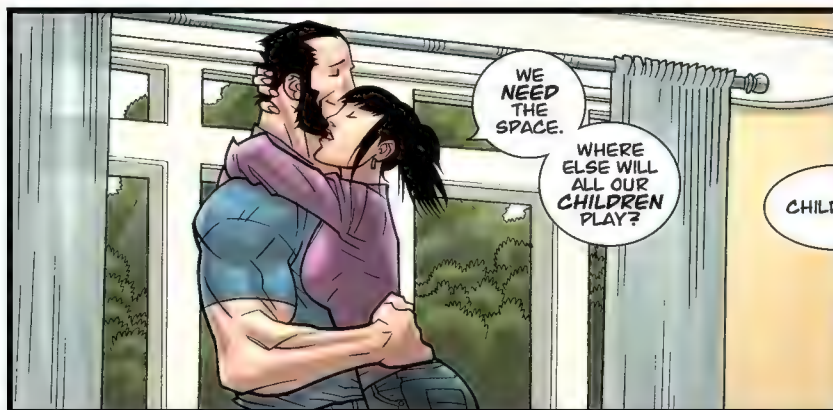
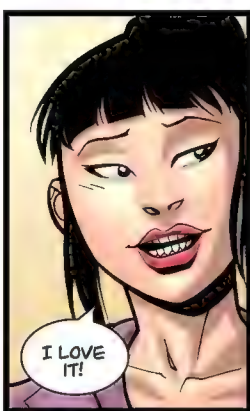


I THINK I'VE  
FOUND THE  
SOLUTION.

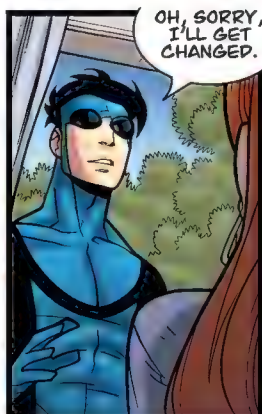
OH MY  
GOD--  
REALLY?!



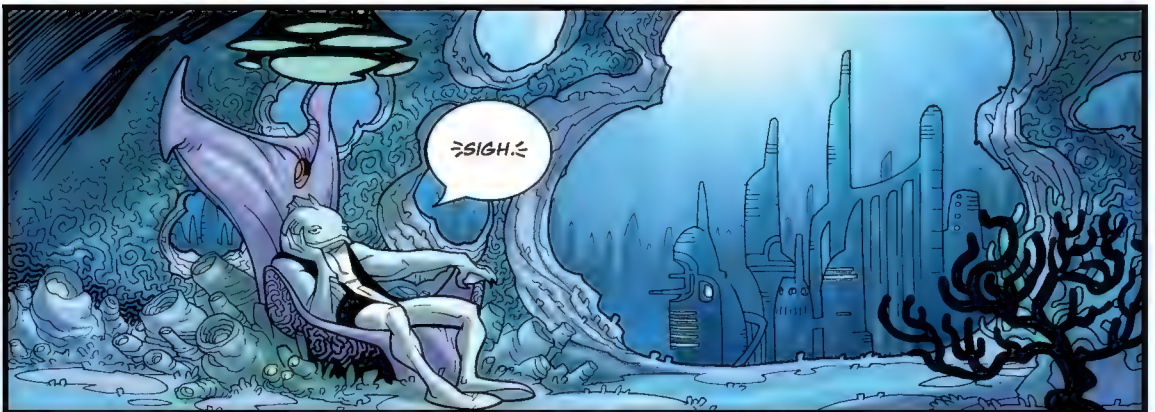
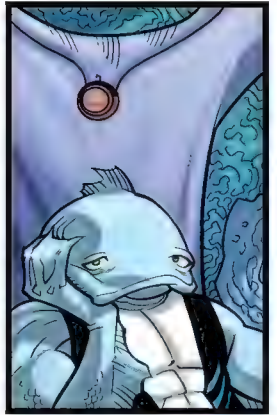
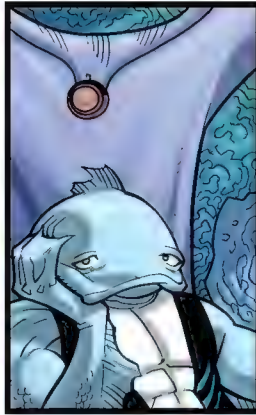
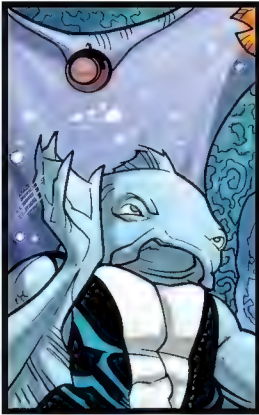
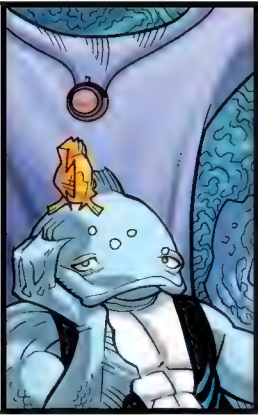
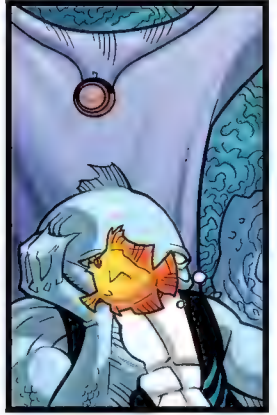
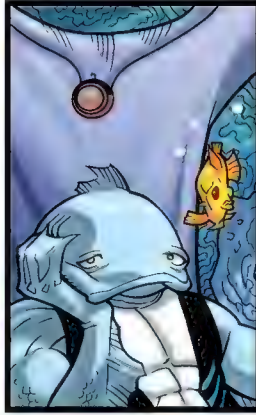
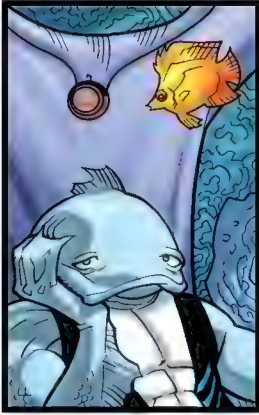
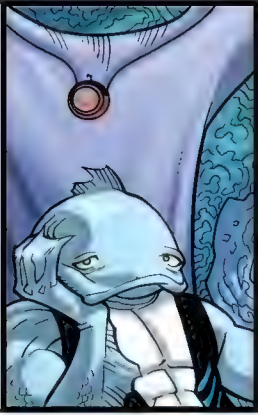
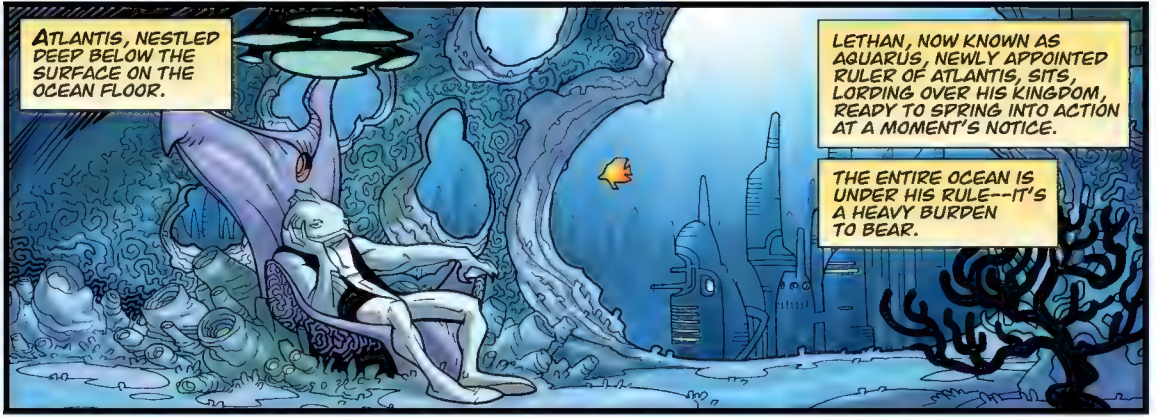




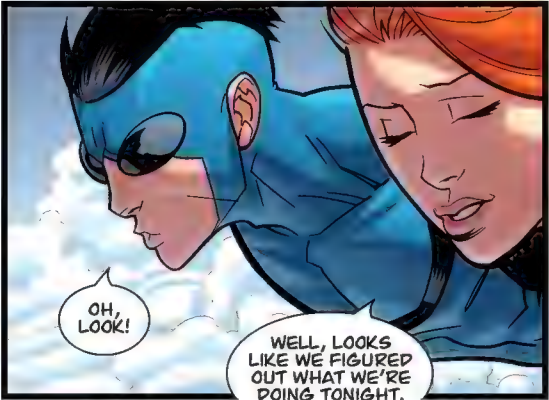




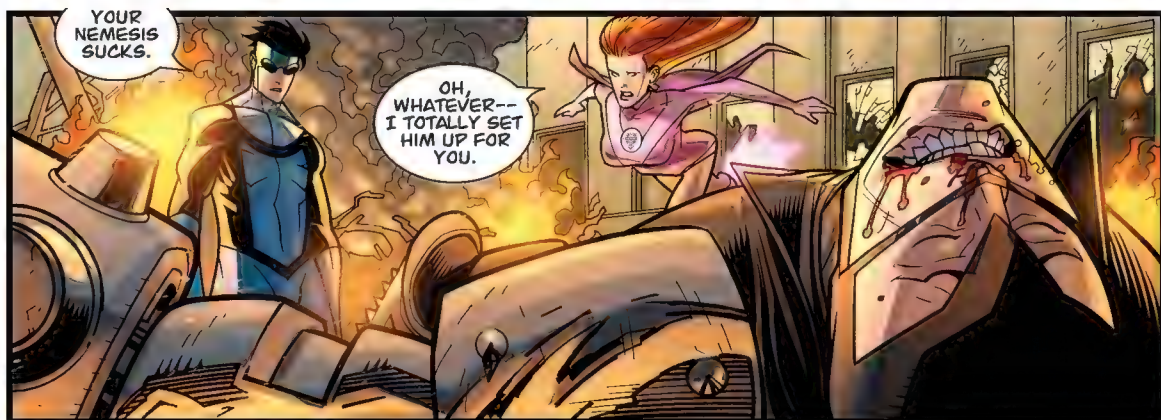




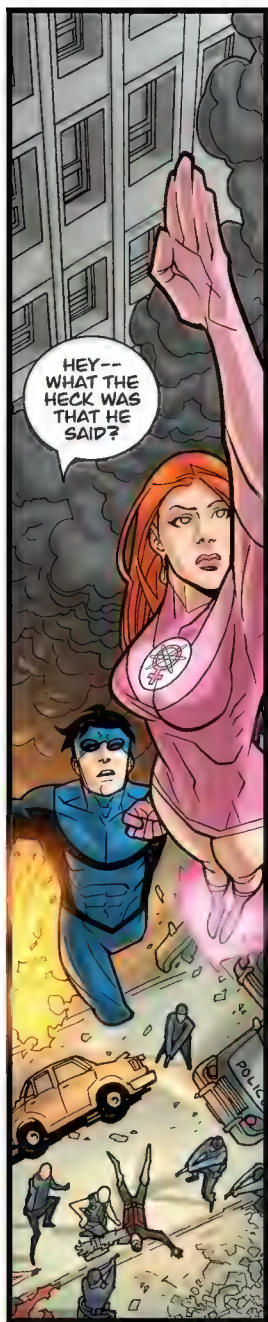




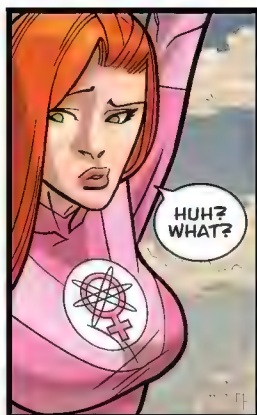








HEY--  
WHAT THE  
HECK WAS  
THAT HE  
SAID?

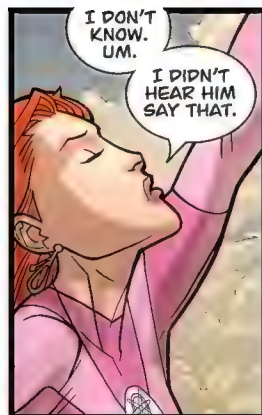


HUH?  
WHAT?



HE SAID  
HE SAW YOU  
AT A PRISON  
TODAY.

IS HE  
CRAZY? DID  
HE REALLY  
SEE YOU?

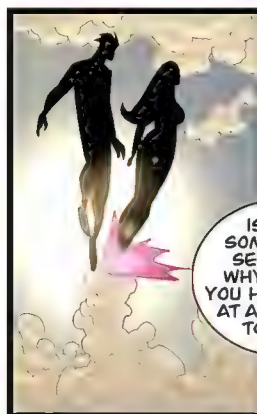


I DON'T  
KNOW.  
UM.

I DIDN'T  
HEAR HIM  
SAY THAT.



I KNOW WE  
HAVEN'T BEEN  
OFFICIALLY  
TOGETHER FOR  
VERY LONG--  
BUT I CAN  
TOTALLY TELL  
WHEN YOU'RE  
LYING.



IS THIS  
SOMETHING  
SERIOUS?  
WHY WOULD  
YOU HAVE BEEN  
AT A PRISON  
TODAY?



EVE?



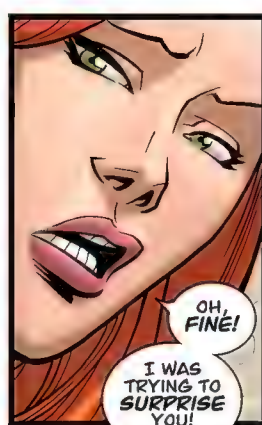
IT'S NOT  
SOMETHING  
SERIOUS.

CAN  
WE DROP  
IT?



I DON'T  
THINK SO.  
NO.

DEFINITELY  
NOT.



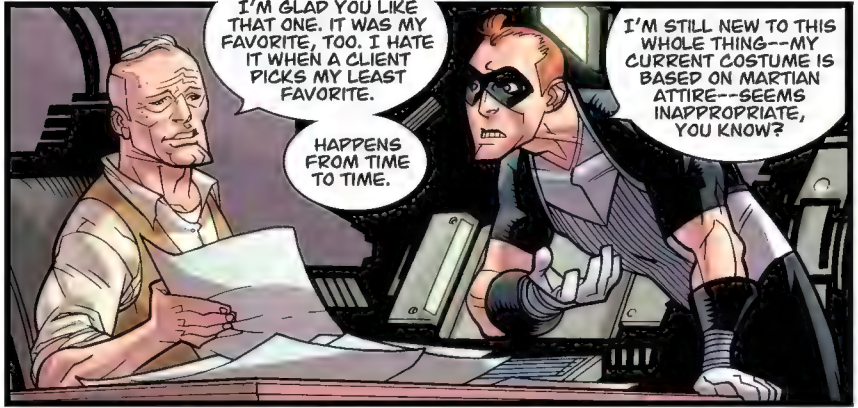
OH  
FINE!

I WAS  
TRYING TO  
SURPRISE  
YOU!



FOLLOW  
ME TO MY  
PARENTS'  
HOUSE.

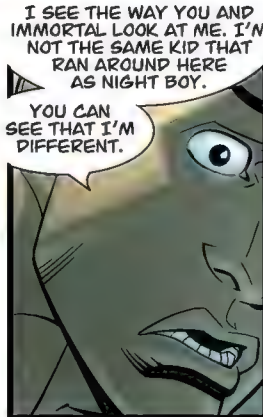
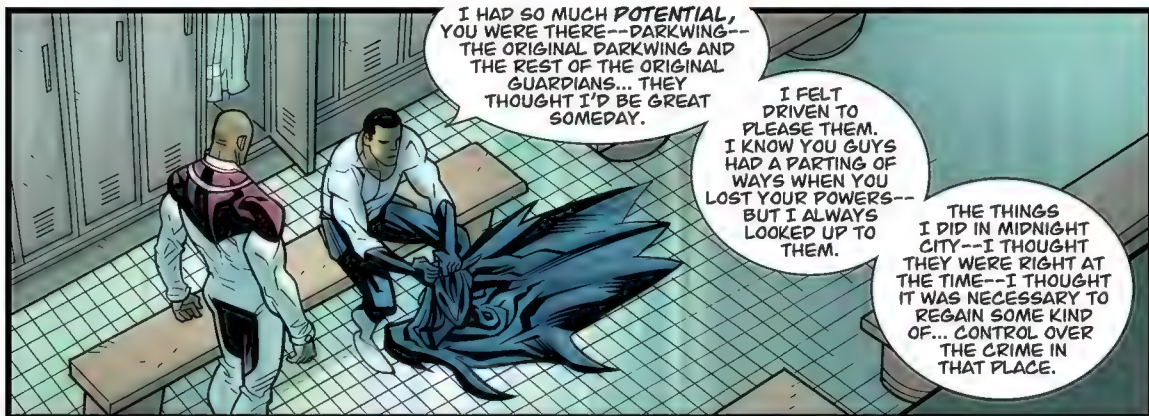




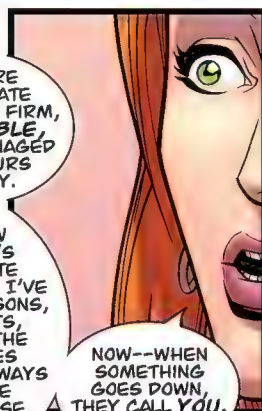
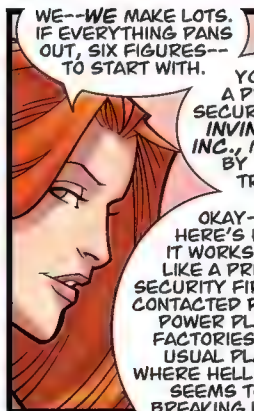
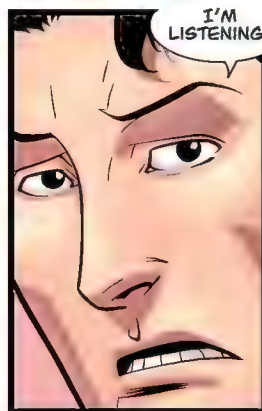
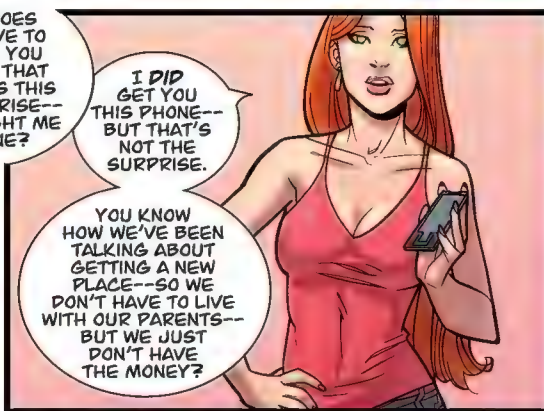
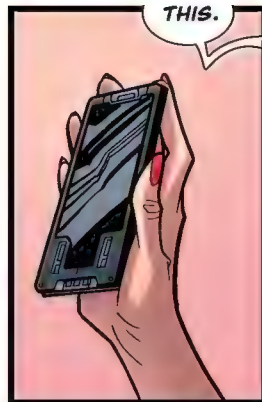
YOU UNDERSTAND?

THAT WON'T BE A PROBLEM.

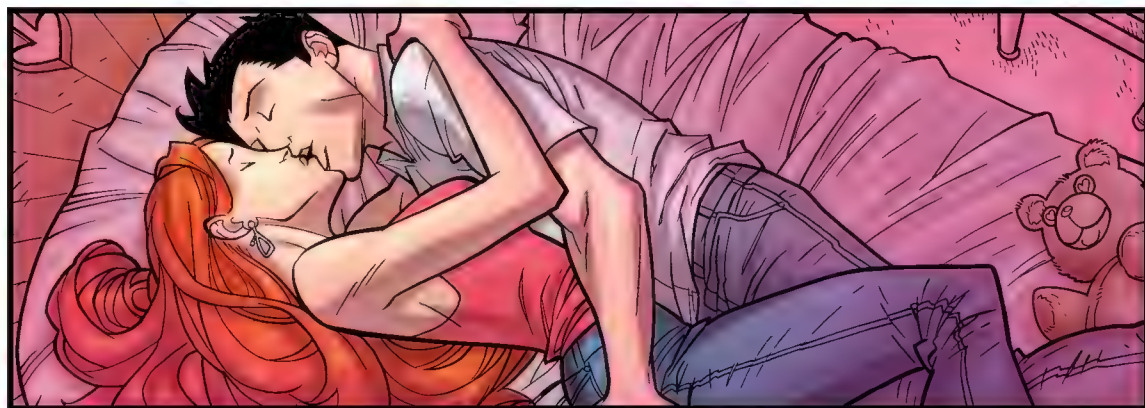
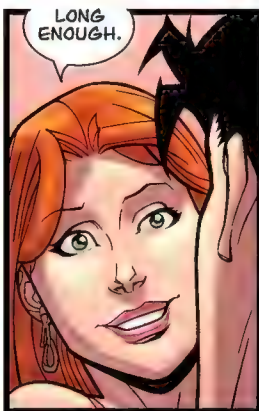
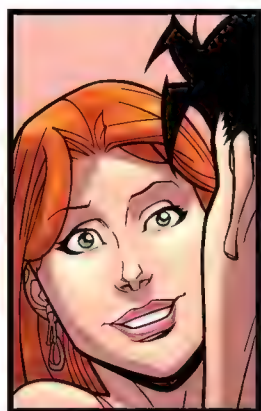
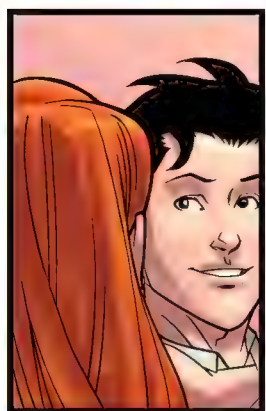
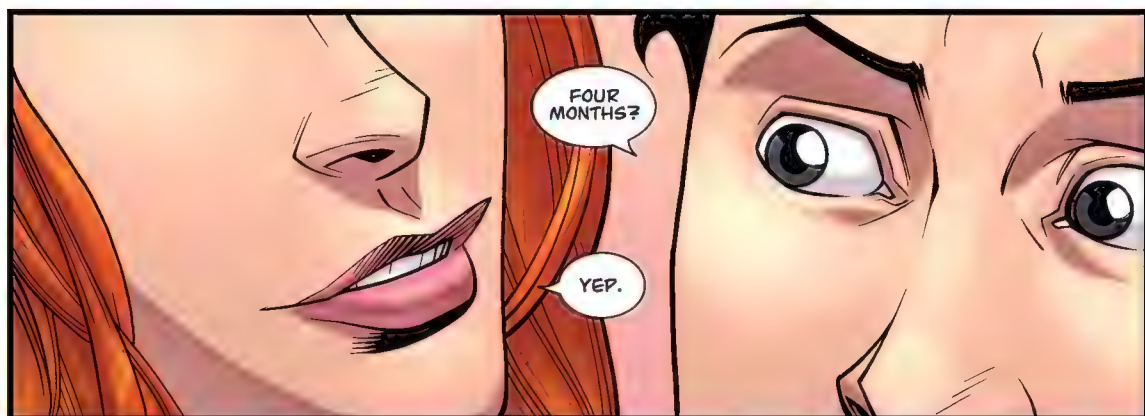
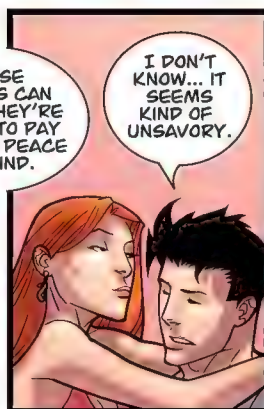




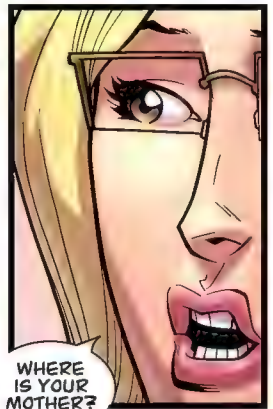
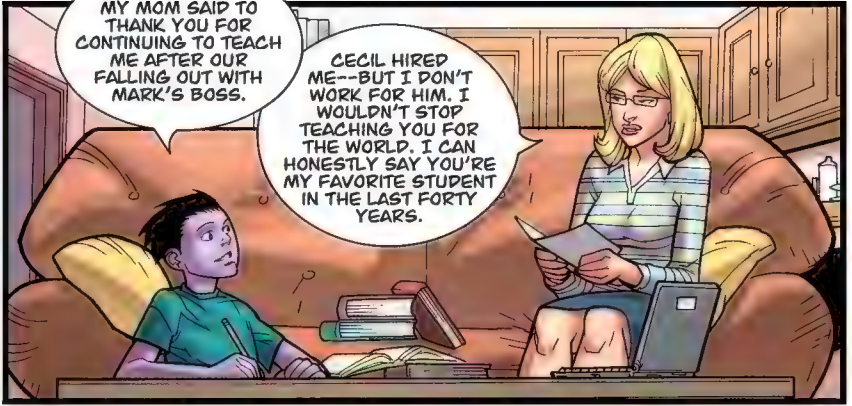
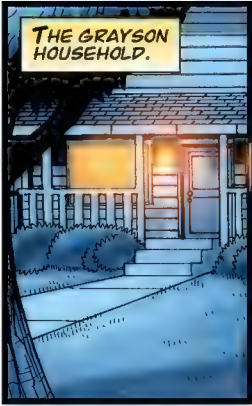




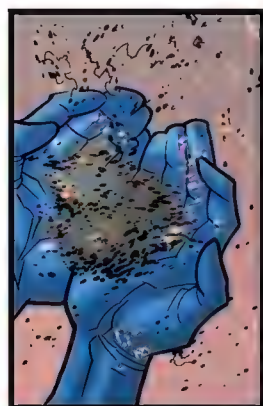
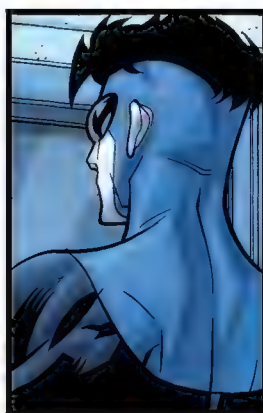
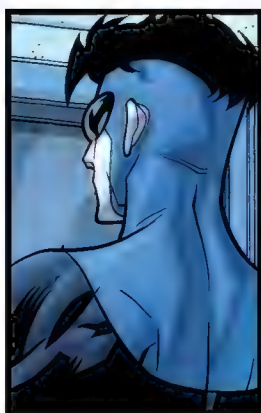








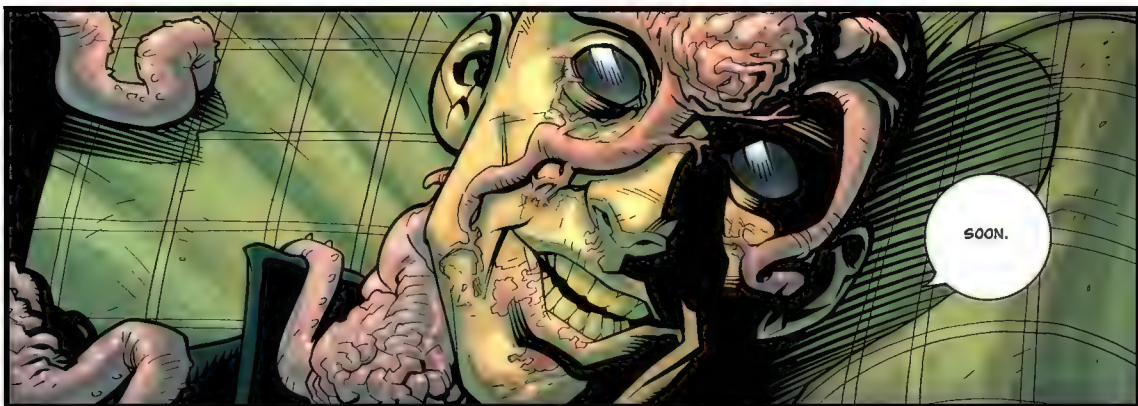




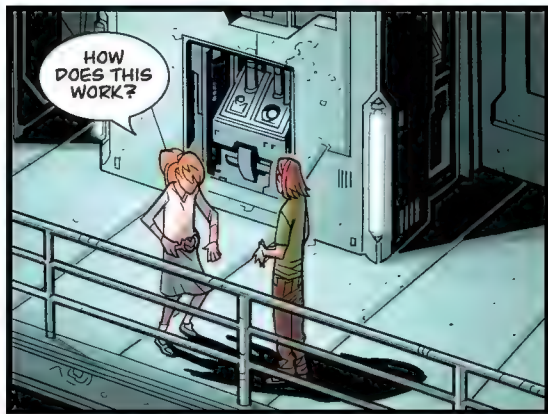
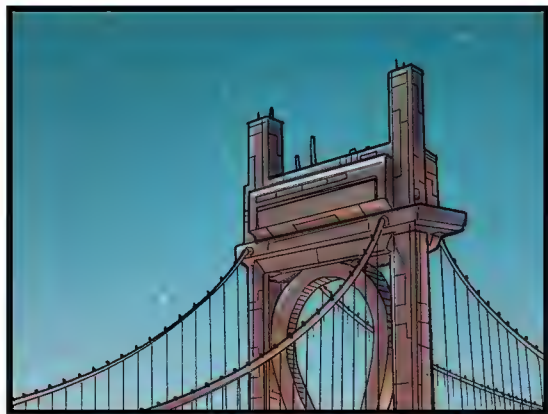




RUS LIVINGSTON!  
BIG-TIME ASTRONAUT  
HERO! SAVED THE  
WORLD THEY SAY!  
HOGWASH!







I'VE BEEN STUDYING YOUR CELLS FOR MANY MONTHS--SAMPLES TAKEN BEFORE YOUR TRANSFORMATION-- AND IMMEDIATELY AFTER.

I'VE FINALLY FOUND THE SOURCE OF YOUR "CURSE."

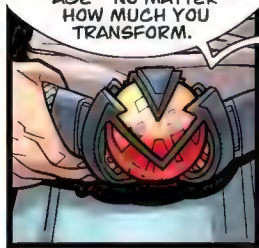
YOUR MONSTER FORM ROBS FROM YOUR CELLS-- ESSENTIALLY DESTROYING THEM IN THE TRANSFORMATION. WHEN YOU REVERT TO YOUR HUMAN FORM-- ITS ESSENTIALLY REBUILDING YOU-- CELL BY CELL.

AND IT'S DOING IT WRONG.

THAT'S WHY I'M GETTING YOUNGER? BECAUSE I'M BEING REBUILT INCORRECTLY?

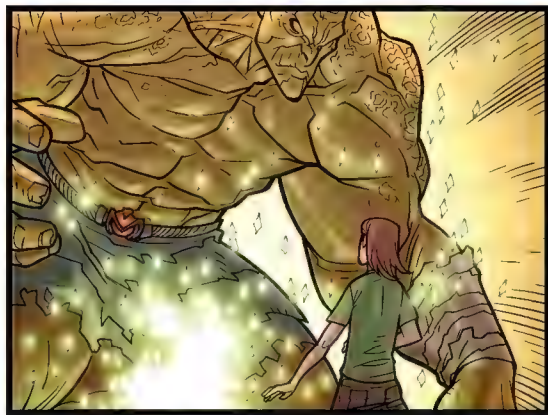
EXACTLY. IT PUTS YOU BACK TOGETHER BUT NOT ALL OF YOUR CELLS SURVIVE THE TRANSFORMATION-- IT REVERSES GROWTH.

THAT BELT WILL TAKE AN EXACT COPY OF YOUR CELL STRUCTURE A FRACTION OF A SECOND BEFORE YOUR TRANSFORMATION--IT WILL STORE IT, AND IT WILL ASSIST IN YOUR RESTRUCTURING-- MAINTAINING YOUR AGE--NO MATTER HOW MUCH YOU TRANSFORM.



TRY IT OUT.

HERE GOES....



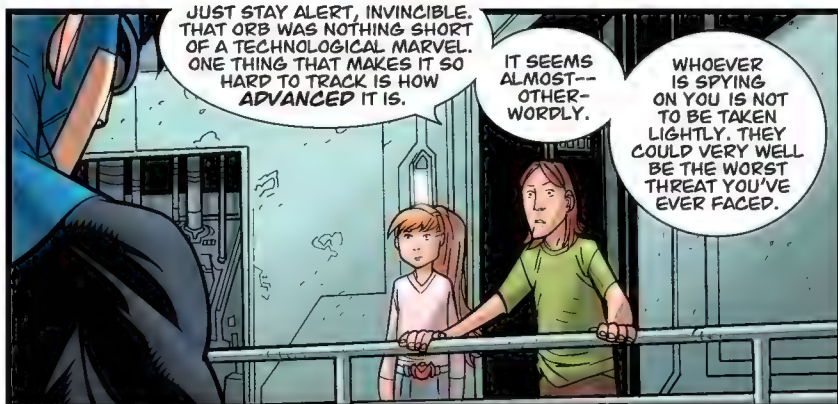
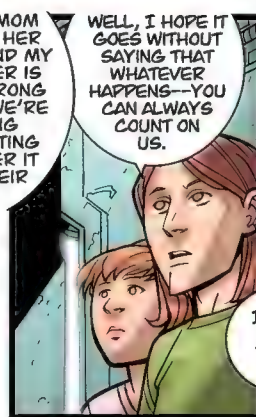
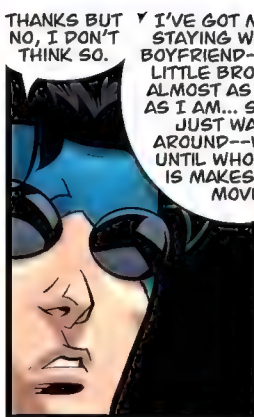
IT'S DESIGNED TO RESIST YOUR TRANSFORMATION-- IT WON'T CHANGE WITH YOUR CLOTHING.

NOW, REVERT BACK.

UNGH... FEELS WEIRD.















IT'S A  
START.







# CHAPTER 59



FYAN





**INVINCIBLE!!**

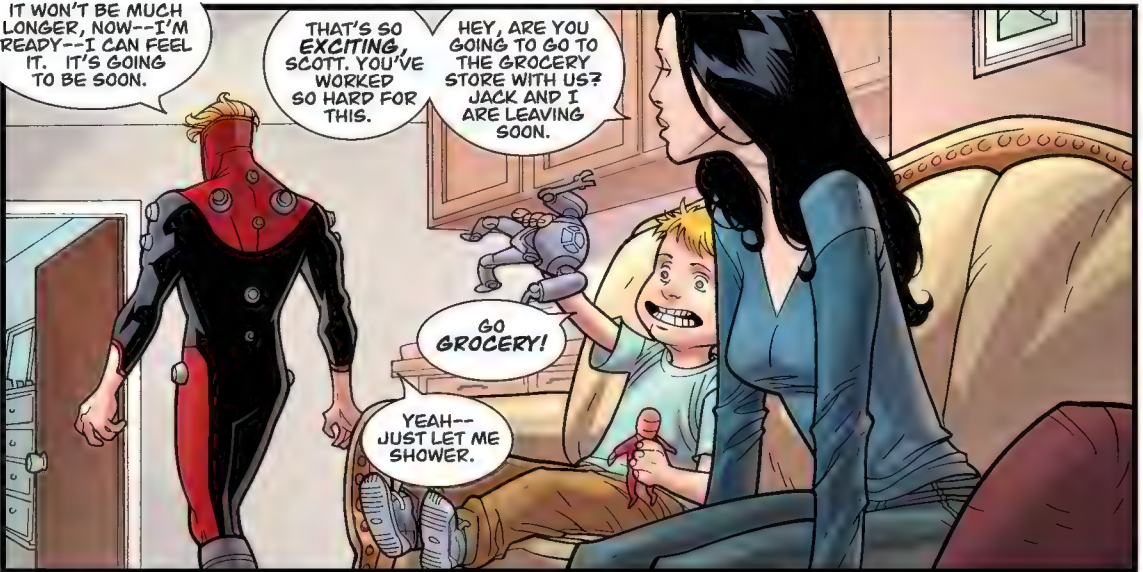
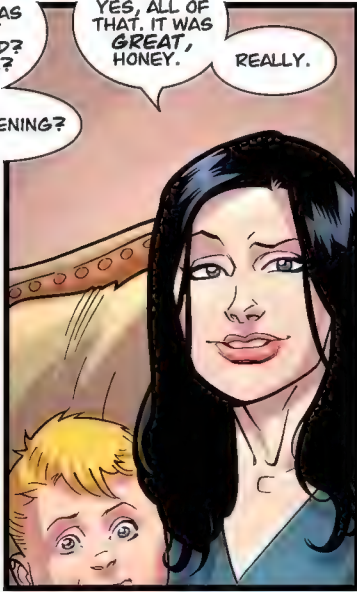
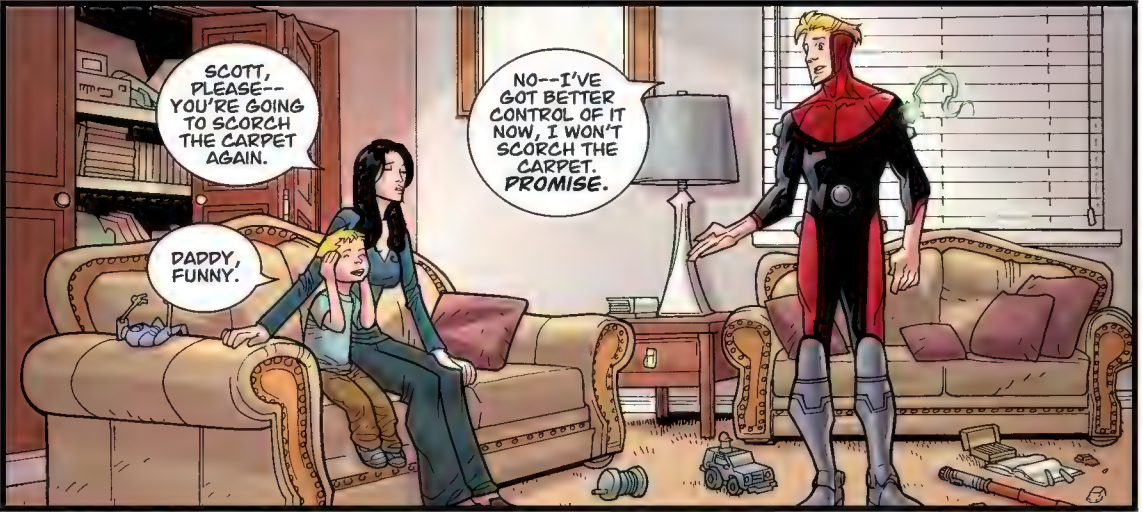
YOU THINK  
YOU ARE ABOVE  
THE LAW--YOU  
THINK YOUR  
ACTIONS HOLD NO  
CONSEQUENCE!

YOU ARE  
**WRONG!**

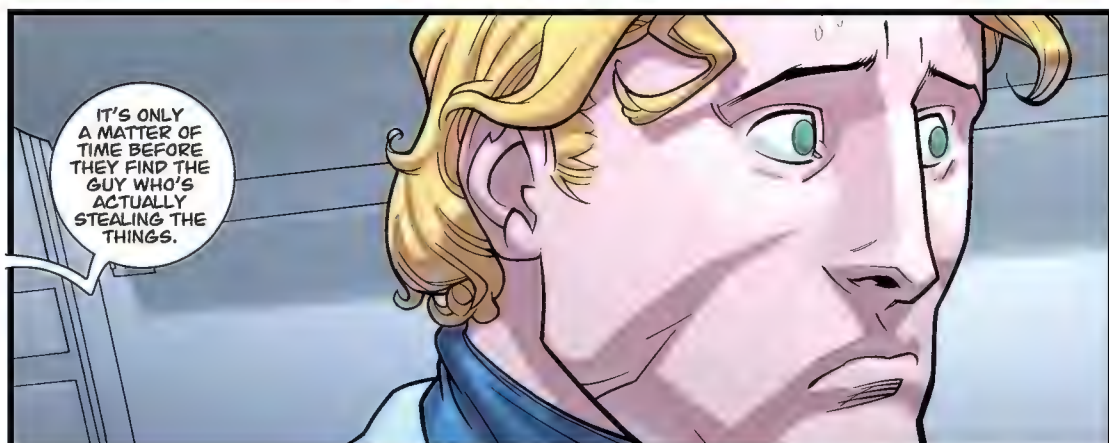
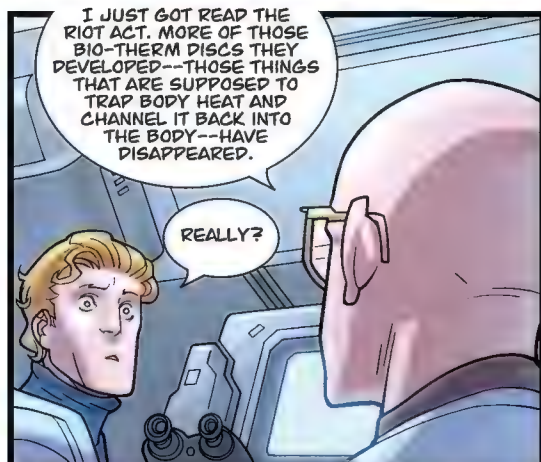
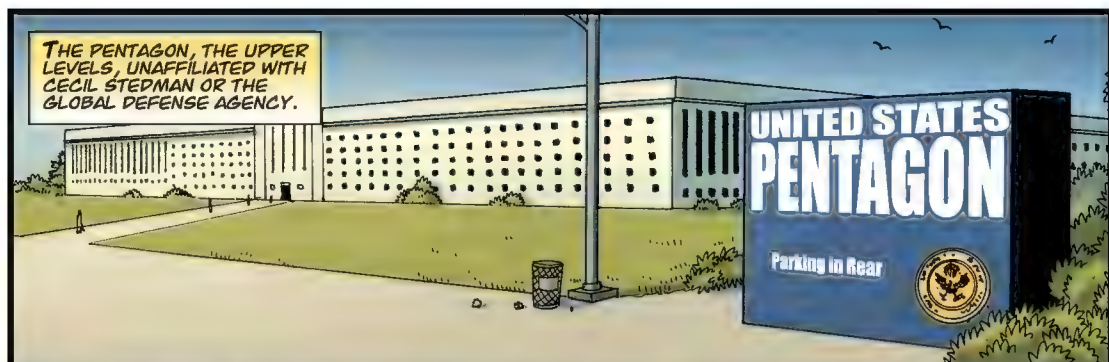
YOU  
WILL PAY  
FOR YOUR  
CRIMES  
AGAINST  
HUMANITY!

**POWERPLEX**  
WILL MAKE  
YOU PAY!!

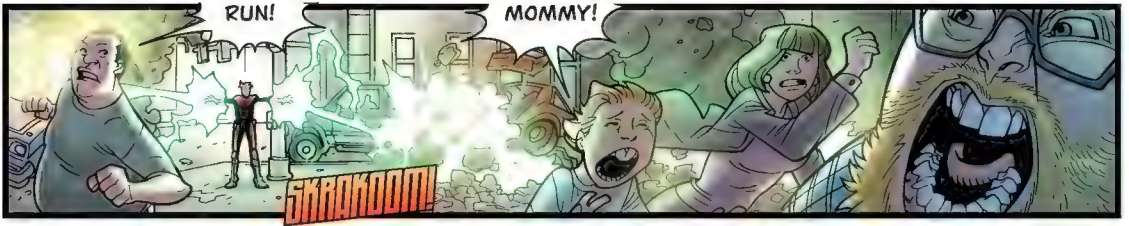








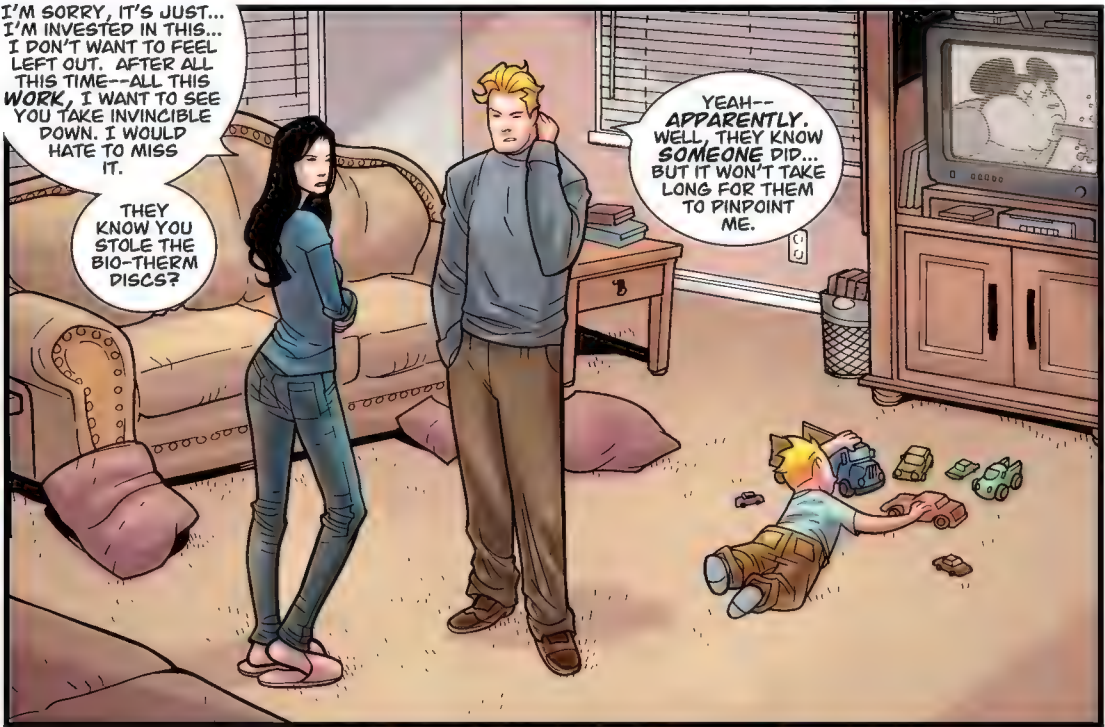




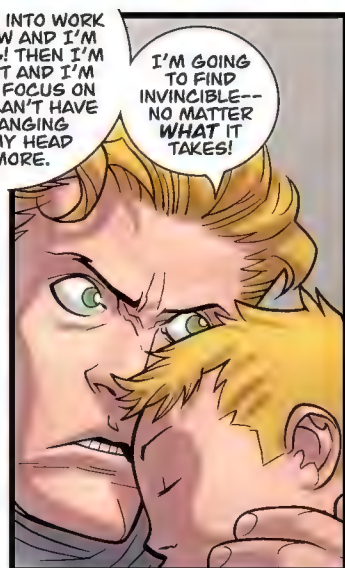
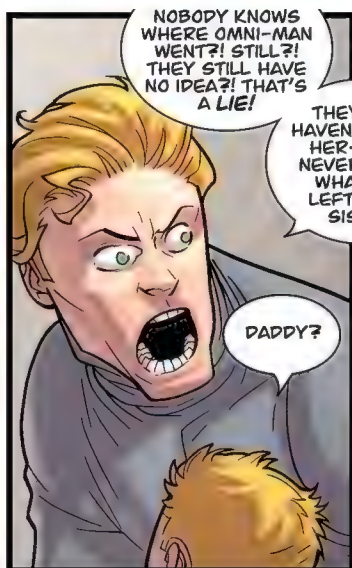
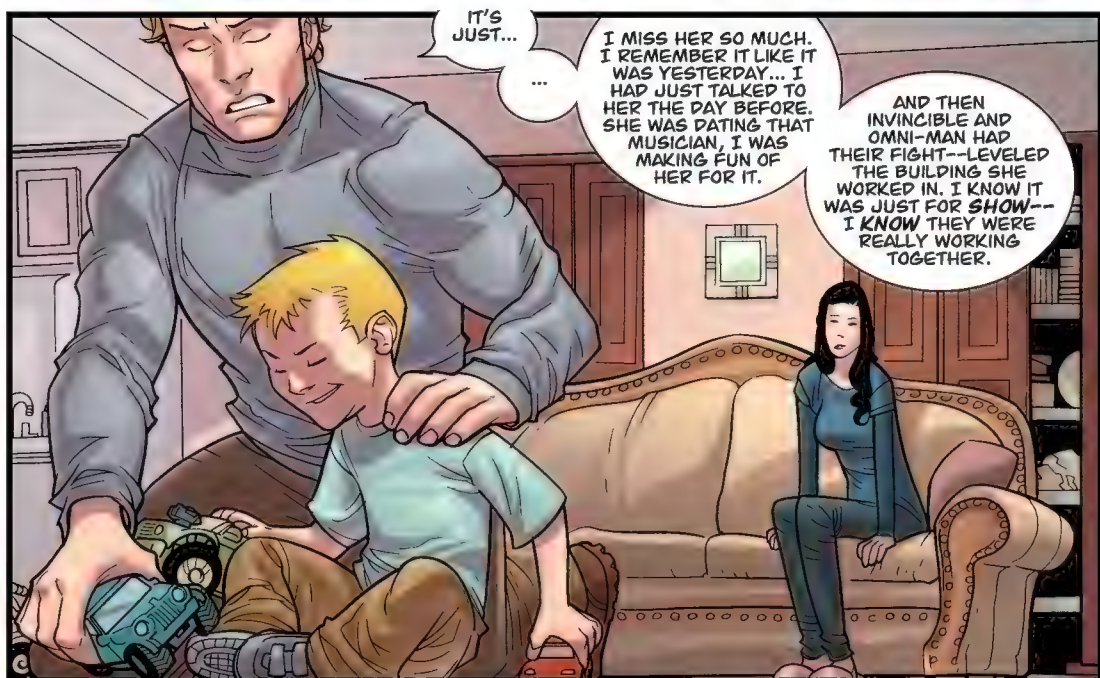
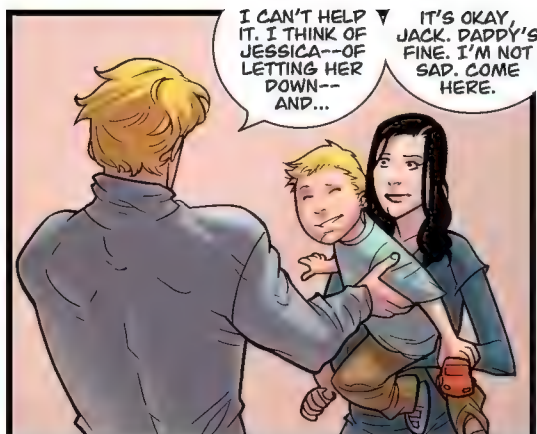
















NO!

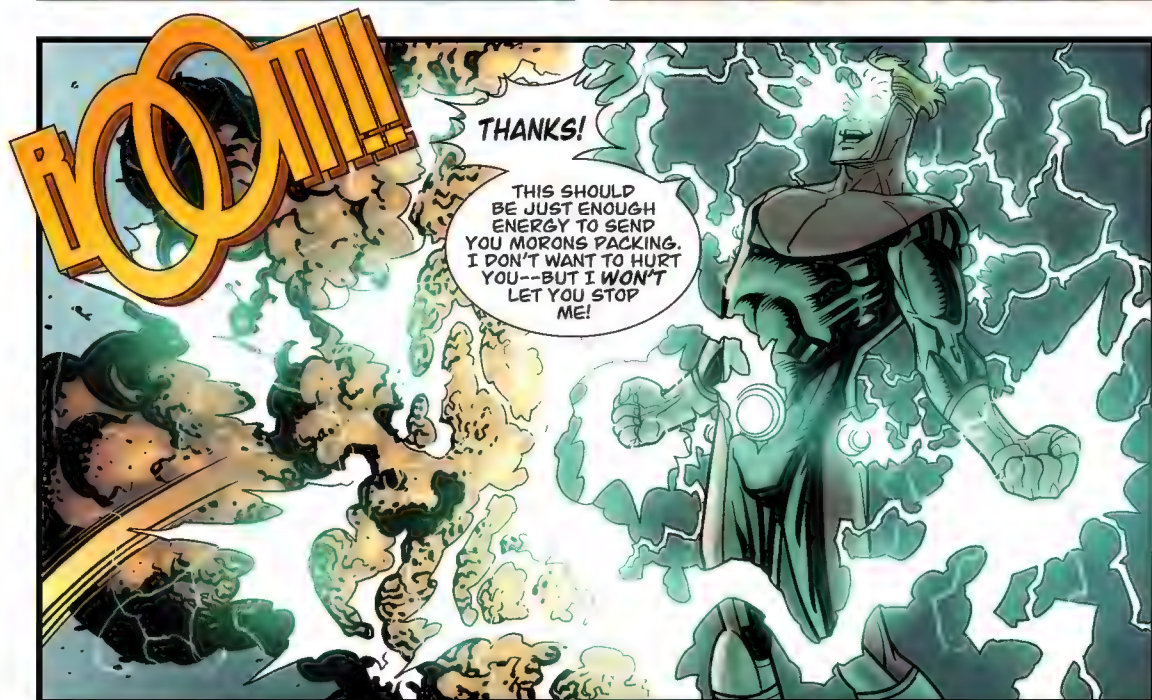
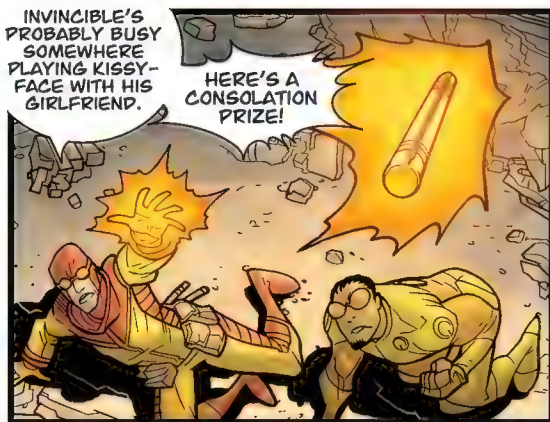
NO!

NO!

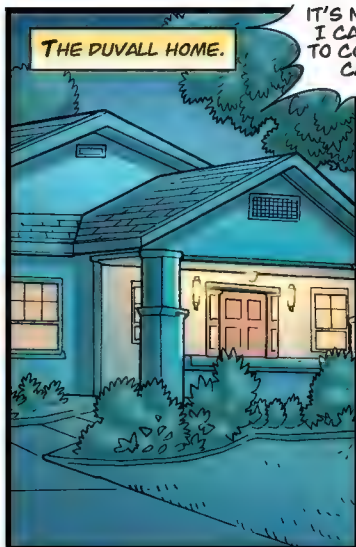
**NO!**

**KROKKA-KA-VA NI!**





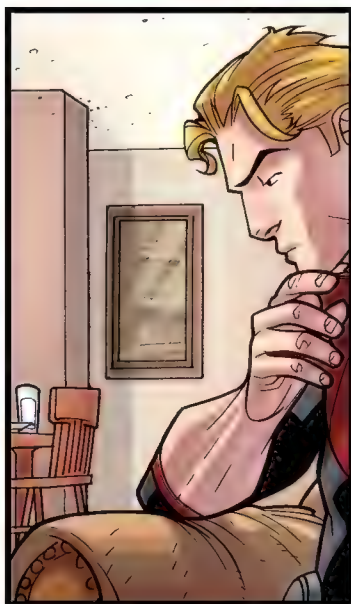
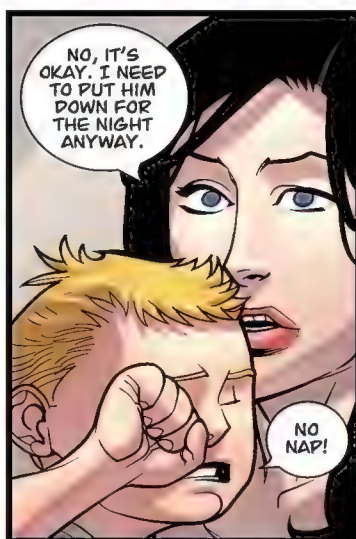




IT'S NOT WORKING!  
I CAN'T GET HIM  
TO COME TO ME! I  
CAN'T FIND  
HIM!

THERE ARE  
TOO DAMN MANY  
SUPERHEROES!  
HOW DO I GET  
INVINCIBLE TO  
COME AFTER  
ME?!

AAARRGH!







NO! IT'S **CRAZY**--  
IT WOULDN'T WORK,  
NOT LIKE I  
WANT.

IT WOULD  
CHANGE  
EVERYTHING...



WHAT IS  
IT? TELL  
ME.

NO, WE  
CAN'T DO IT--  
YOU'D BE TOO  
INVOLVED.



IT WOULD MAKE ME LOOK  
**MORE** LIKE A VILLAIN--  
SOMETHING I'VE WANTED  
TO AVOID. I'D BE  
MISUNDERSTOOD AT FIRST--  
IT WOULD TAKE A LONG  
TIME FOR PEOPLE TO  
FULLY REALIZE  
THE **GOOD** I'D  
DONE.

I CAN'T  
DO IT. I  
CAN'T.

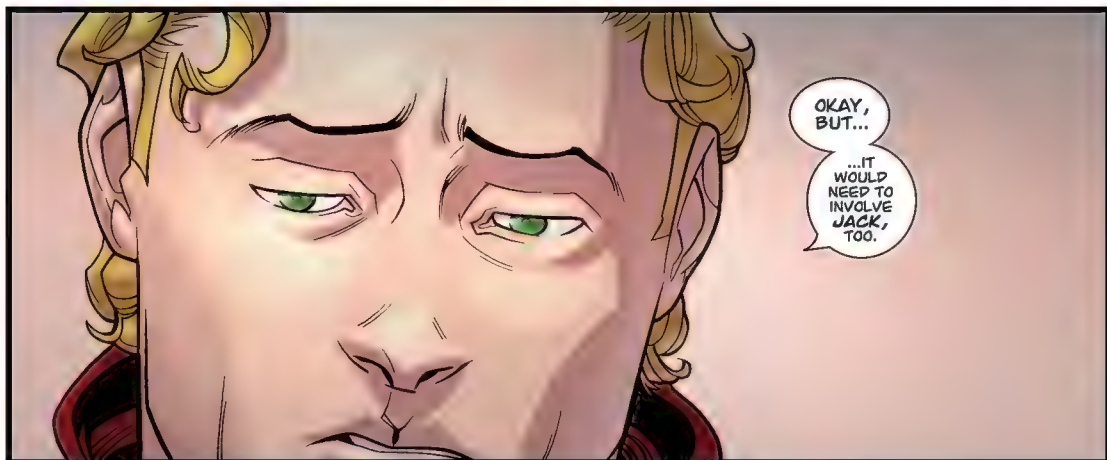
BUT IT  
MIGHT BE  
THE **ONLY**  
WAY...



NO--IF IT'S THE  
ONLY WAY THEN YOU  
TELL ME! I DON'T  
CARE WHAT IT TAKES--I  
WANT TO DO IT. IF YOU  
NEED ME TO HELP,  
PLEASE LET  
ME!

THAT  
MONSTER KILLED  
YOUR SISTER!  
WE'VE COME TOO  
FAR WITH THIS TO  
STOP NOW--LET'S  
DO THIS TOGETHER,  
YOU AND ME!

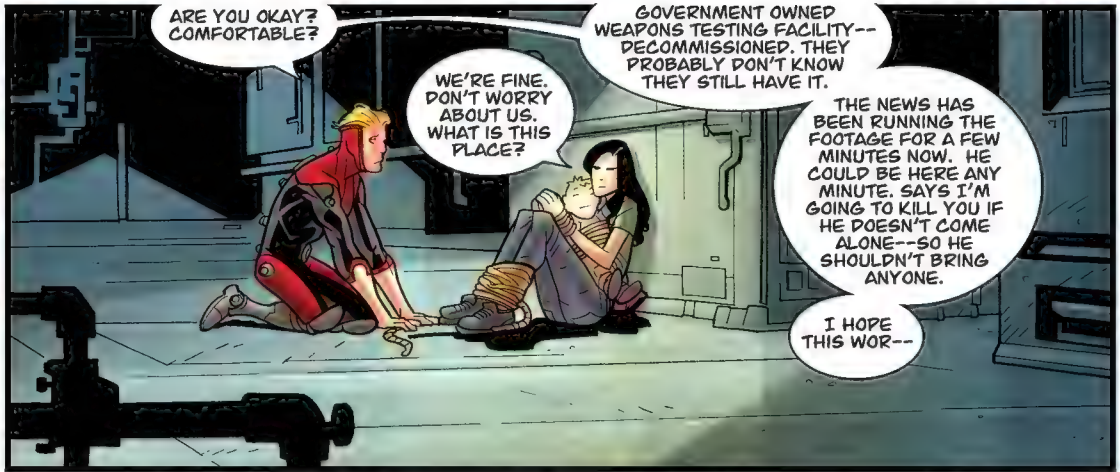
LET'S DO  
WHATEVER  
IT TAKES  
TO KILL  
INVINCIBLE.



OKAY,  
BUT...

...IT  
WOULD  
NEED TO  
INVOLVE  
**JACK**,  
TOO.





ARE YOU OKAY?  
COMFORTABLE?

WE'RE FINE.  
DON'T WORRY  
ABOUT US.  
WHAT IS THIS  
PLACE?

GOVERNMENT OWNED  
WEAPONS TESTING FACILITY--  
DECOMMISSIONED. THEY  
PROBABLY DON'T KNOW  
THEY STILL HAVE IT.

THE NEWS HAS  
BEEN RUNNING THE  
FOOTAGE FOR A FEW  
MINUTES NOW. HE  
COULD BE HERE ANY  
MINUTE. SAYS I'M  
GOING TO KILL YOU IF  
HE DOESN'T COME  
ALONE--SO HE  
SHOULDN'T BRING  
ANYONE.

I HOPE  
THIS WOR--



WHAT  
THE HECK,  
DUDE?!

PLEASE LET THIS  
LADY AND HER KID  
GO. YOU DON'T HAVE  
TO DO THIS. I DON'T  
EVEN KNOW WHO  
YOU ARE!

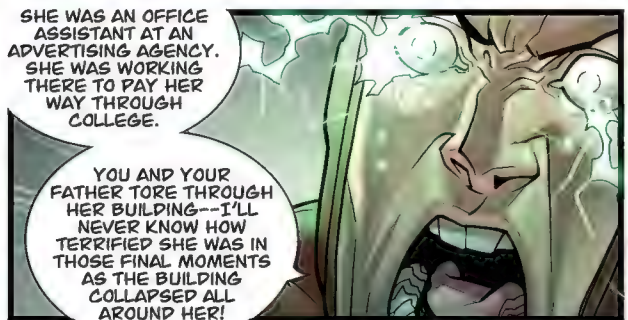


DO YOU  
KNOW WHO  
JESSICA  
DUVALL  
IS?



NO. I  
DON'T.

AGAIN,  
MAN--  
WHAT THE  
HECK?



SHE WAS AN OFFICE  
ASSISTANT AT AN  
ADVERTISING AGENCY.  
SHE WAS WORKING  
THERE TO PAY HER  
WAY THROUGH  
COLLEGE.

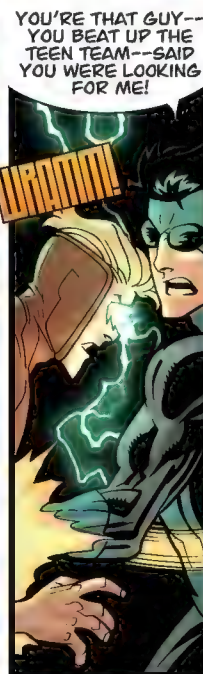
YOU AND YOUR  
FATHER TORE THROUGH  
HER BUILDING--I'LL  
NEVER KNOW HOW  
TERRIFIED SHE WAS IN  
THOSE FINAL MOMENTS  
AS THE BUILDING  
COLLAPSED ALL  
AROUND HER!



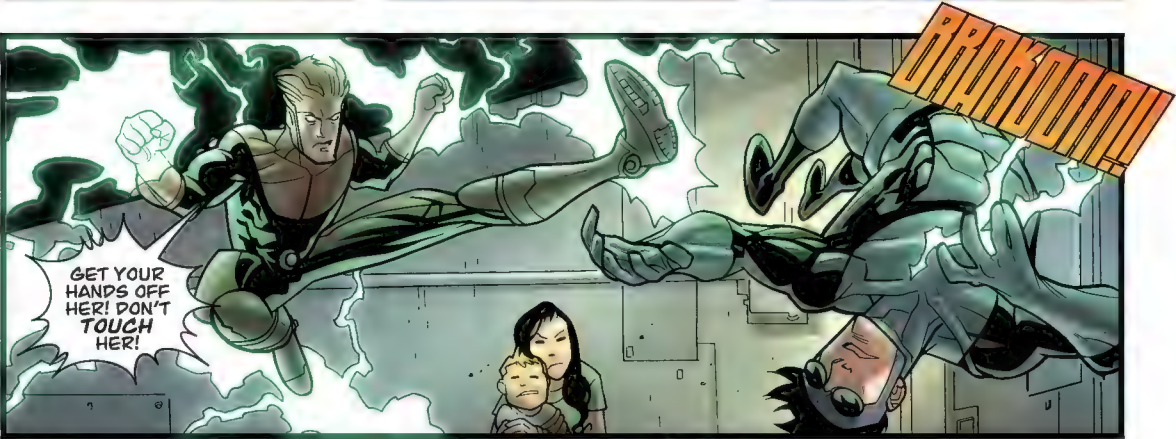
A LOT...  
A LOT OF  
PEOPLE DIED IN  
THAT FIGHT. I  
DON'T KNOW  
THE NAME OF  
EVERY ONE...

I'M  
SORRY,  
ALL I CAN  
SAY IS I'M  
SORRY.







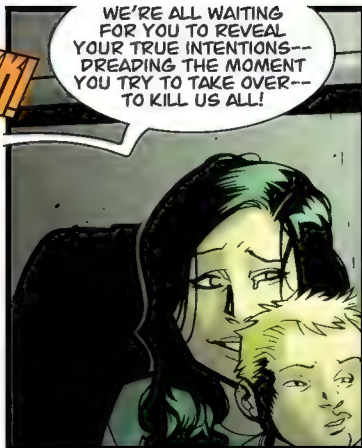




THE PEOPLE FEAR  
YOU, Y'KNOW? IT  
MIGHT NOT BE  
OBVIOUS--BUT  
YOU SCARE  
EVERYONE!



WE'RE ALL WAITING  
FOR YOU TO REVEAL  
YOUR TRUE INTENTIONS--  
DREADING THE MOMENT  
YOU TRY TO TAKE OVER--  
TO KILL US ALL!



BUT THEY WON'T HAVE  
TO WORRY ABOUT  
THAT, I'LL PROTECT  
THEM FROM YOU.  
I'LL MAKE SURE YOU  
NEVER HURT  
ANYONE EVER  
AGAIN.



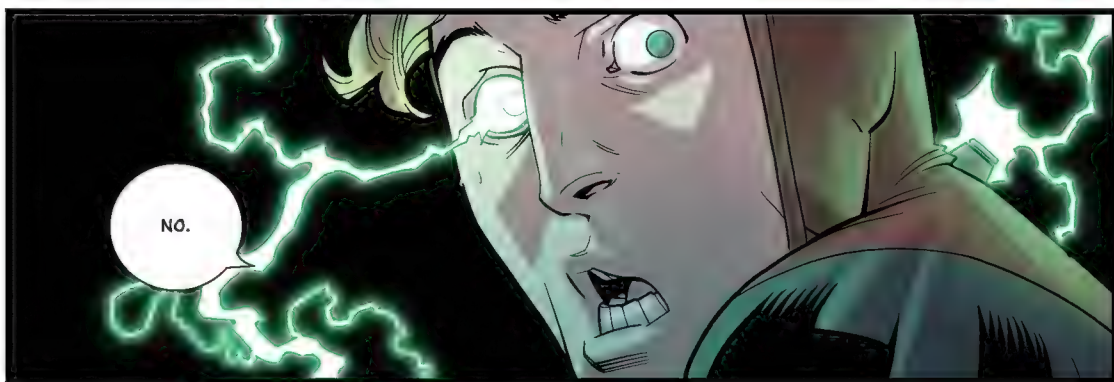
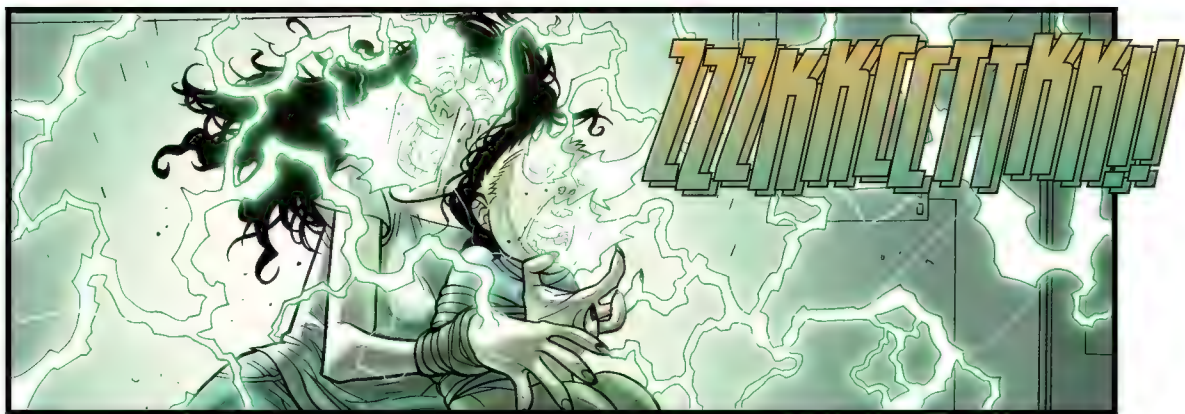
DIE  
INVINCIBLE!

FOR  
EVERYTHING  
YOU'VE DONE!  
FOR ALL THE  
PAIN YOU'VE  
CAUSED!

**DIE!**











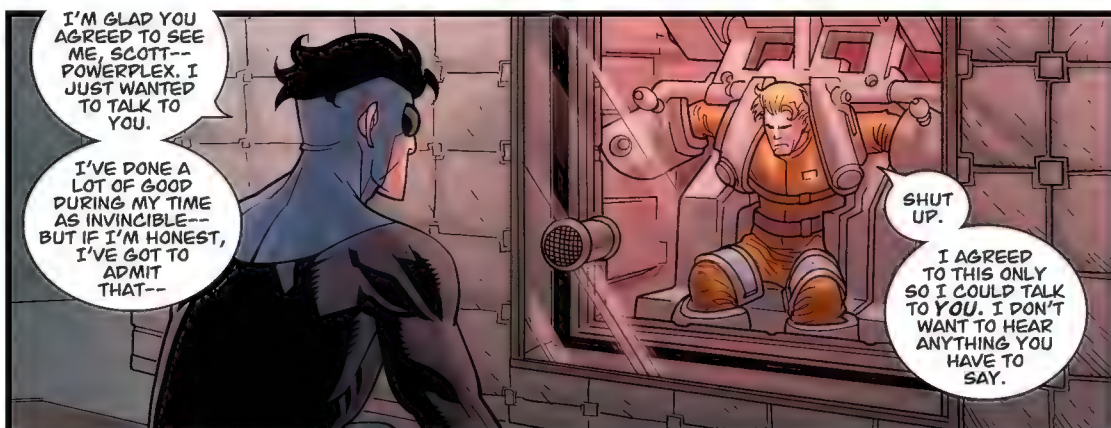


















# CHAPTER 60





**MONTHS AGO.**

OH,  
GOD.

OH,  
GOD.

OH,  
GOD.

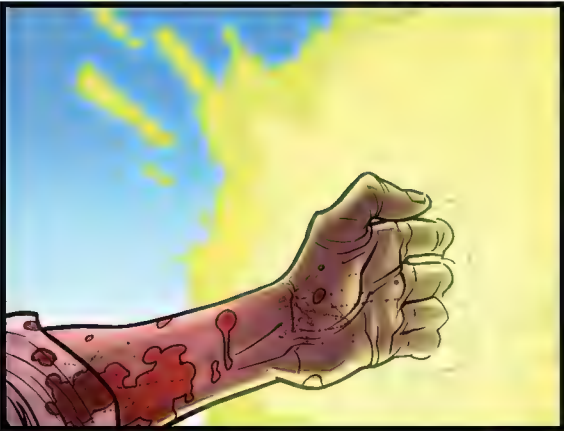
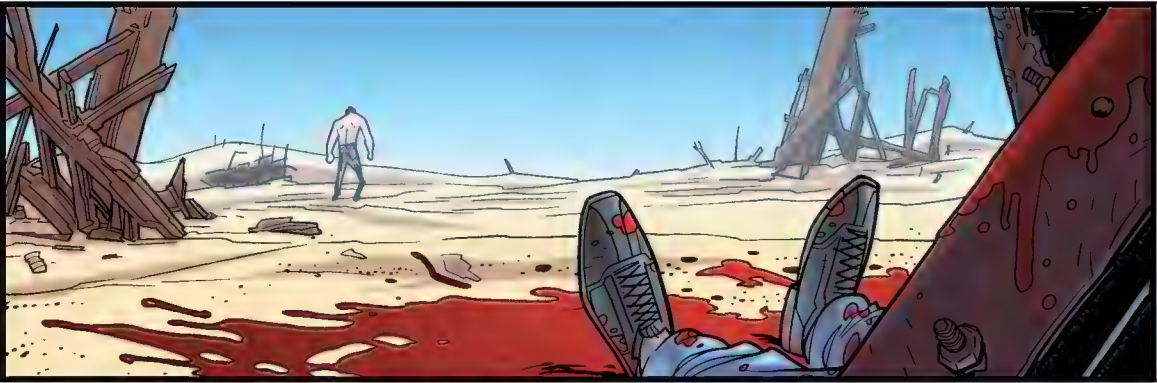
OH,  
GOD.

OH,  
GOD.

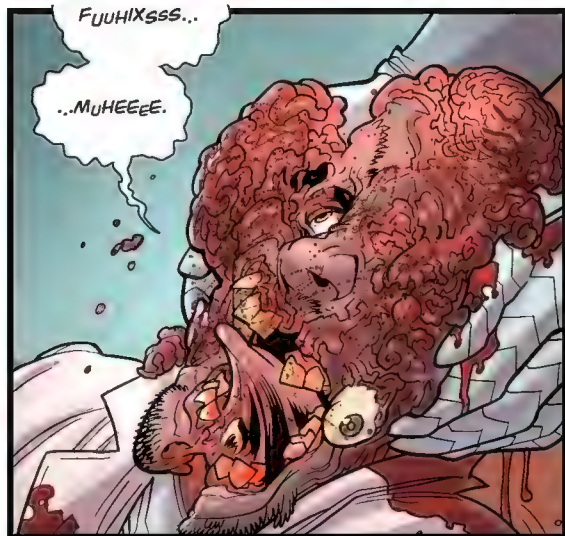
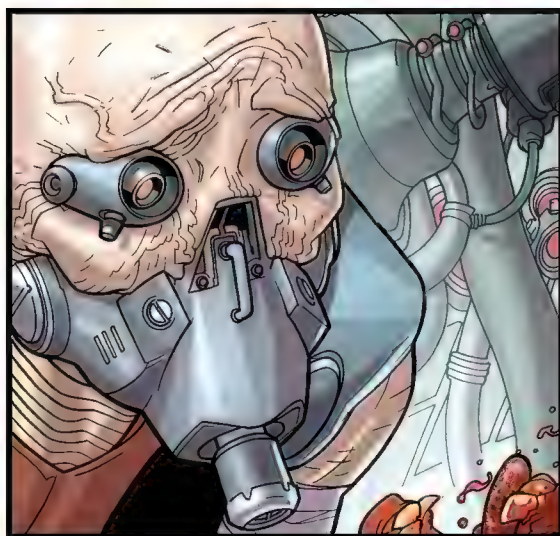
OH,  
GOD.













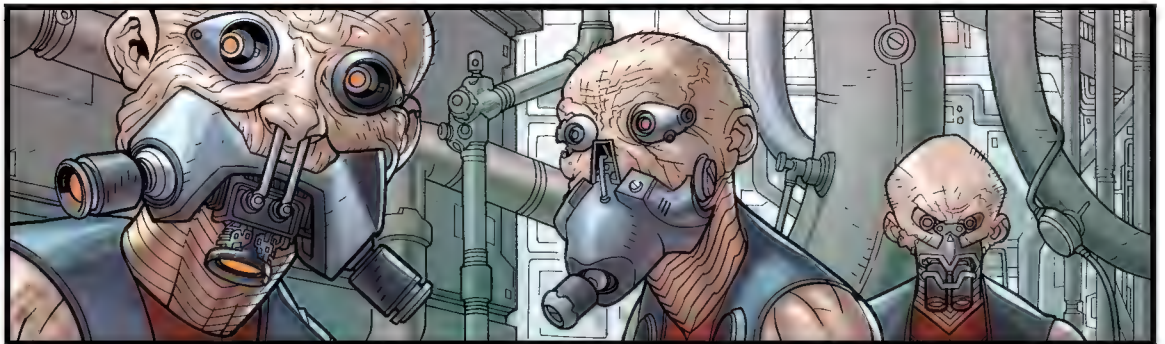
MONTHS LATER.



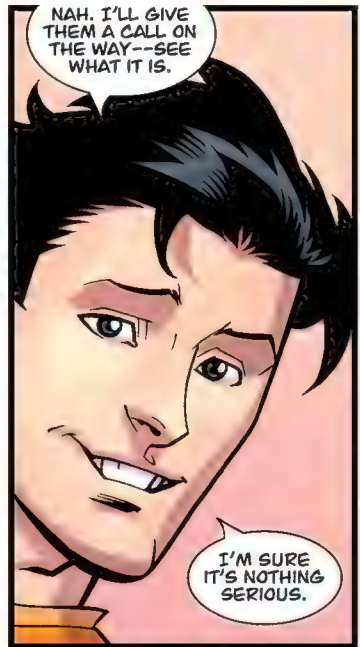
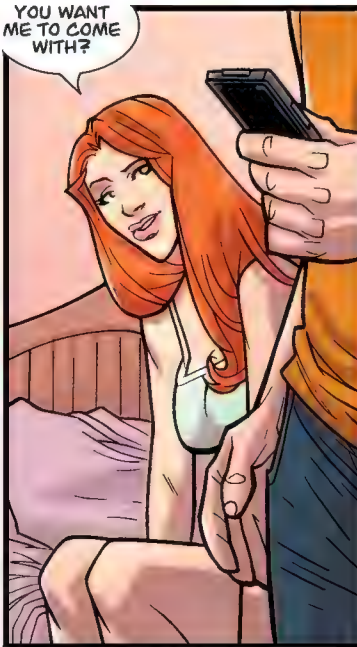
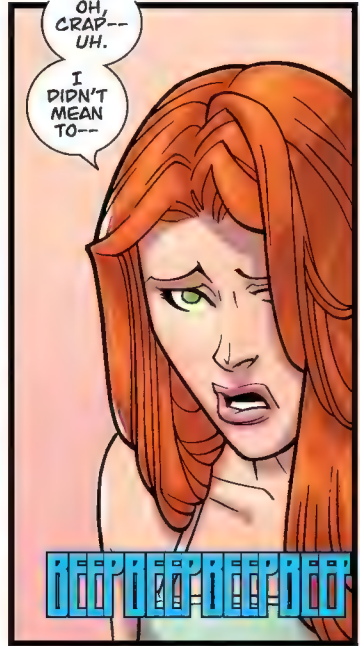
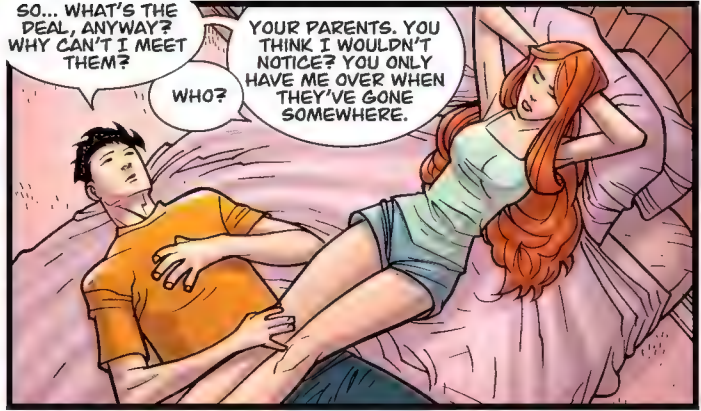
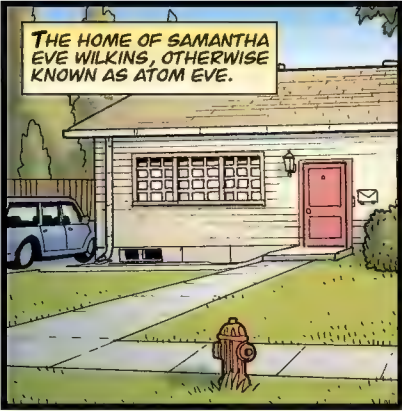
Now.

DAY ONE.





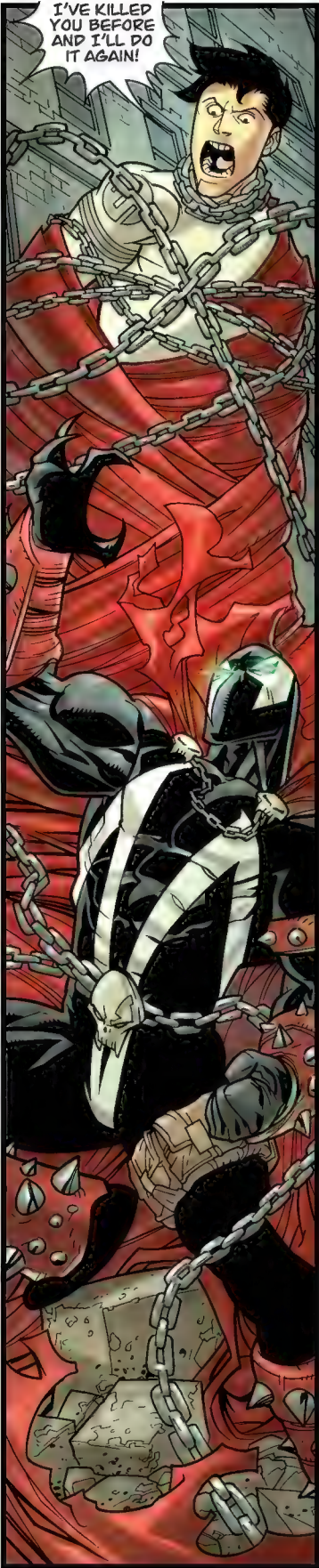














STOP THIS! WE'RE TOO  
EVENLY MATCHED--  
JUST STOP! THIS COULD  
GO ON FOREVER!

STOP FIGHTING  
AND TELL ME HOW  
YOU GOT HERE--  
WHO BROUGHT YOU  
HERE?! HOW DID  
YOU GET TO THIS  
DIMENSION?!

**KROOM!**

YOU'LL GET NO ANSWERS  
FROM ME! I WILL NEVER  
YIELD TO YOU. IT SICKENS  
ME TO EVEN LOOK  
AT YOU.

A LESSER VERSION OF ME--  
A PALE REFLECTION. I'LL SEE  
YOUR BRAINS SMEARED  
ACROSS MY KNUCKLES  
BEFORE I BOW  
BEFORE YOU.

I'LL--

**WROKK!**

**SHUT  
UP!**

**KROOM!**

WHAT  
THE HELL  
IS--

HEY!

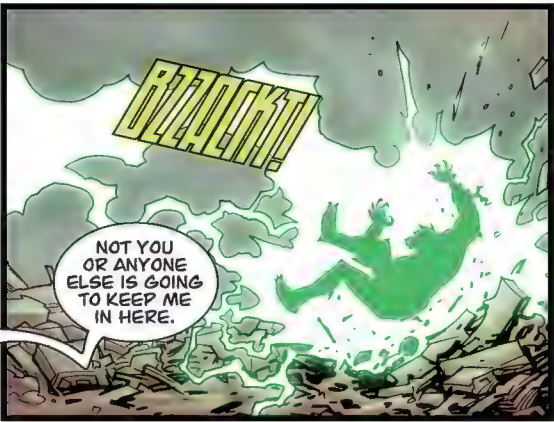
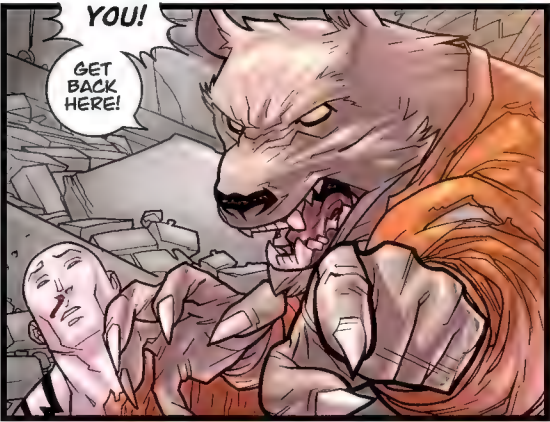
THERE'S ANOTHER  
ONE--**GET HIM!** WE'VE  
GOT TO STOP THESE  
BASTARDS BEFORE  
IT'S TOO LATE!

WHAT?!

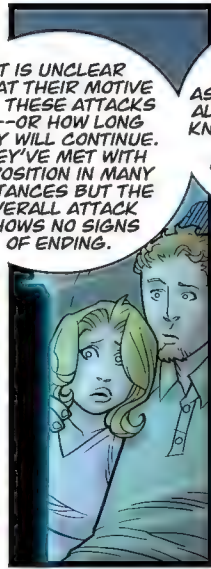
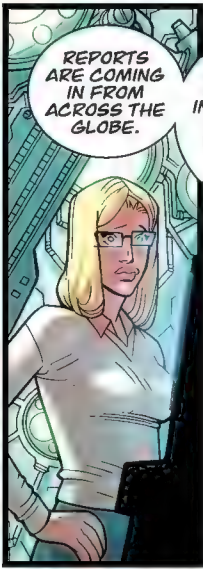
GUYS--  
IT'S ME!

IT'S--!

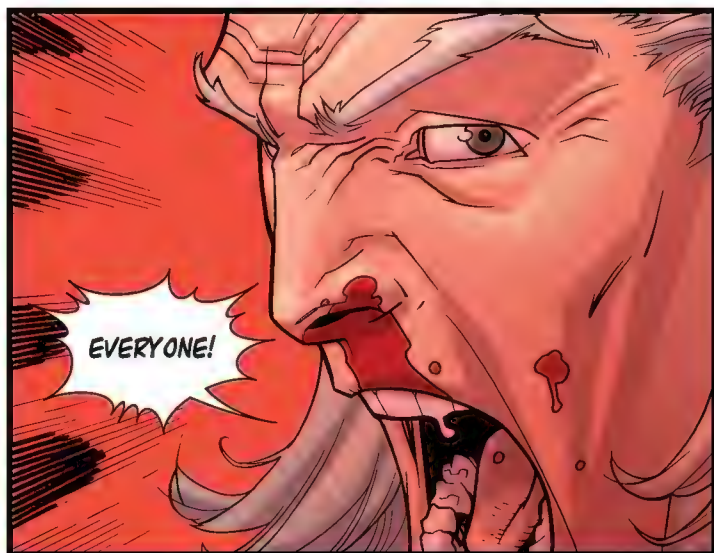
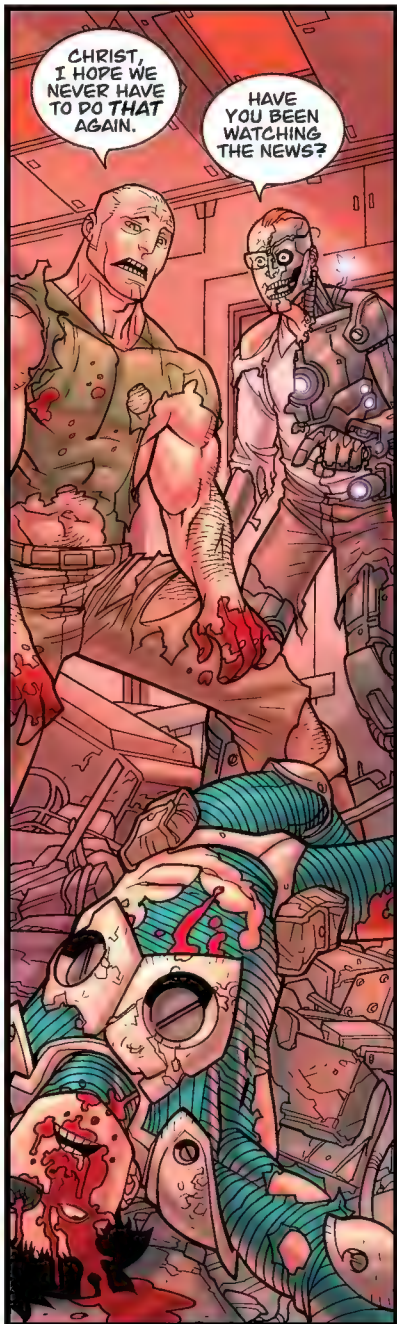
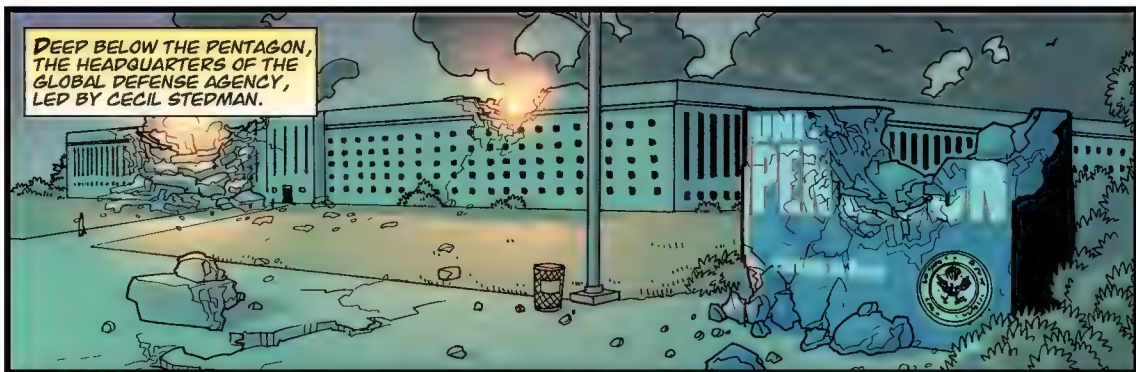














DAY TWO.

SPREAD OUT AND ENTER THE TRANSPORT WINDOWS, DOUBLE TIME! BE READY FOR WHATEVER FACES YOU WHEN YOU EMERGE, DROP POINTS ARE BEING CHOSEN AT RANDOM-- WE'VE GOT NO TIME FOR SPECIFIC MATCH-UPS.

WE'VE GOT MULTIPLE THREATS, MULTIPLE LOCATIONS-- THIS SITUATION IS DIRE, I WANT CONTINUAL UPDATES ON THE COMLINKS, IF YOU'RE DOWN WE NEED TO KNOW IMMEDIATELY SO REPLACEMENTS CAN BE DISPATCHED.

LET'S SAVE THE WORLD, PEOPLE!

EVERYONE LISTEN UP, THIS IS AGENT CECIL STEPMAN. MOST OF YOU HAVE NO CLUE WHO I AM SO JUST ASSUME I'M YOUR BOSS' BOSS BECAUSE IN MOST CASES THAT'S TRUE. I'LL BE COORDINATING THINGS FROM HERE.

IF YOU'RE INJURED, REPORT IN IMMEDIATELY. I'LL HAVE MISS POPPER ON STAND-BY TO RETRIEVE ANYONE NOT FIT FOR COMBAT.

POPPER, YOU UP FOR THIS?

I'VE BEEN DRINKING ORANGE JUICE ALL MORNING.

THIS WON'T BE ENOUGH! NOT NEARLY ENOUGH! CYBLADE, RIPCLAW, HEATWAVE, VELOCITY, BALLISTIC--IT'S AMUSING TO SEE YOU ALL WORKING TOGETHER AGAIN-- CYBERFORCE, WAS IT?

IT DOESN'T MATTER, I KNOW EVERYTHING ABOUT YOU AND YOU CAN'T HOPE TO WIN THIS FIGHT!

THIS IS YOUR FINAL BATTLE-- ENJOY IT WHILE IT LASTS!

THEY'RE JUST UP AHEAD, WON'T BE LONG NOW.

SORRY I'M PULLING YOU SO FAST.

THEY'RE ALL ME. I'M NOT DOING THIS--BUT I CAN'T HELP BUT--I LOOKED IN HIS EYES AND I SAW MYSELF. I FEEL RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL OF THIS.

BEYOND THAT--IT'S OTHER VERSIONS OF ME, FROM OTHER DIMENSIONS...

IT'S OKAY, WE'VE GOTTA BE AS FAST AS POSSIBLE. ARE YOU OKAY?

NO. I'M NOT.

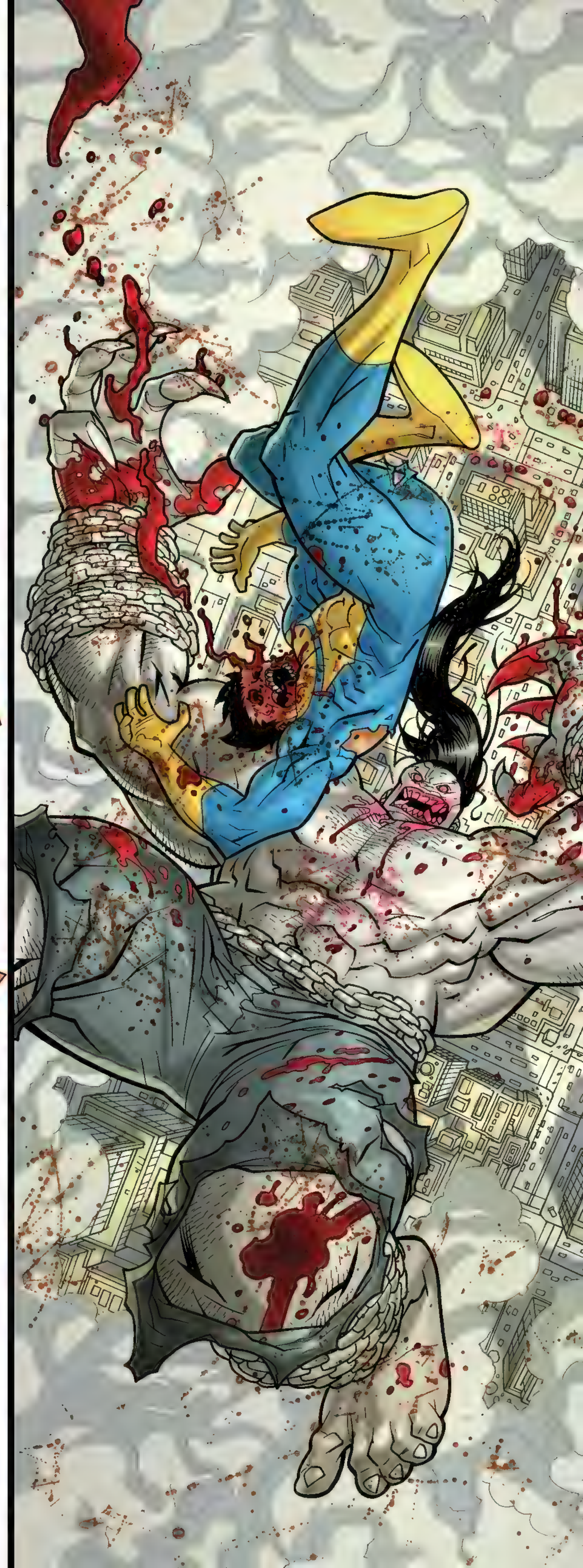
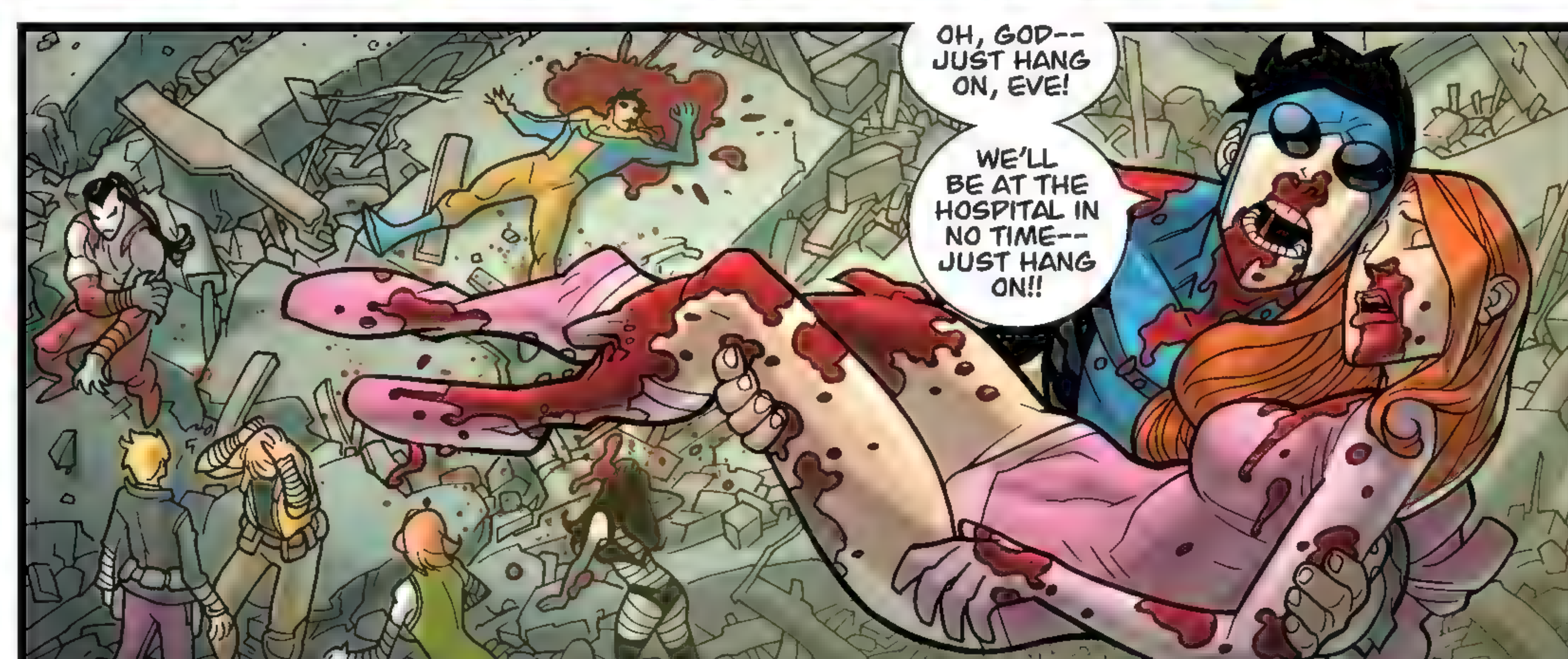
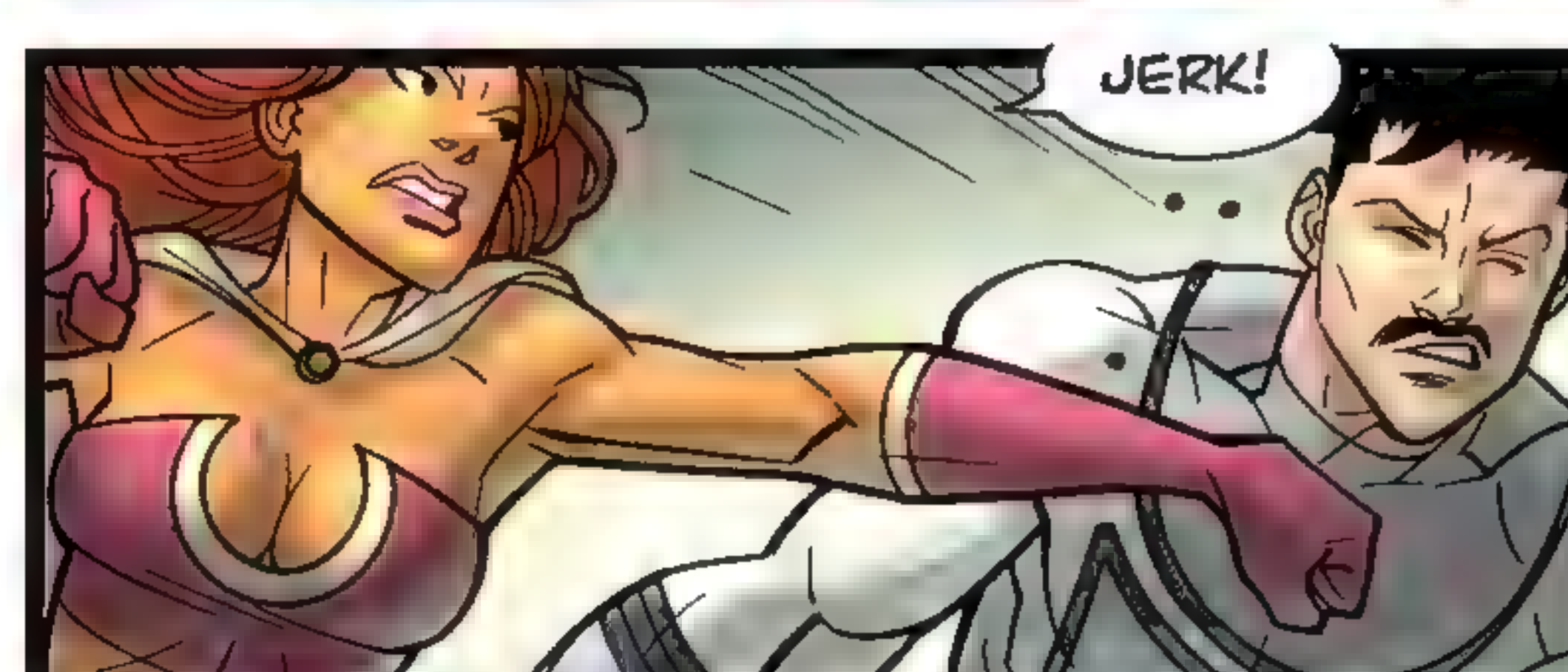
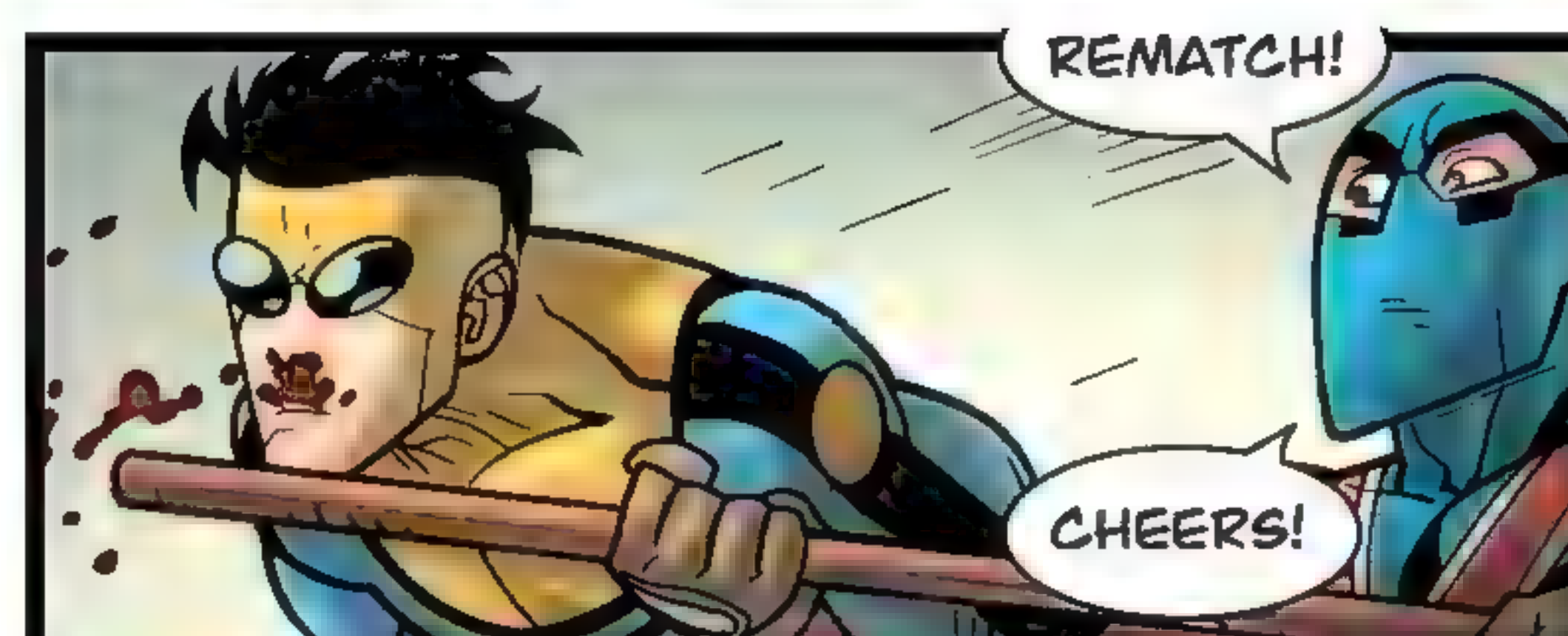
I ONLY KNOW OF ONE MAN WHO HAS THE POWER TO ACCESS OTHER DIMENSIONS AND HATES ME ENOUGH TO DO THIS.

BUT THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE...

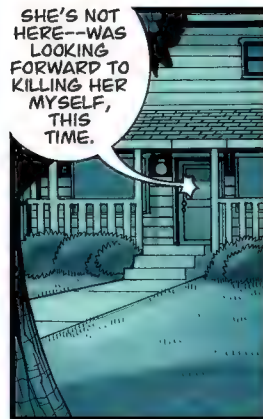
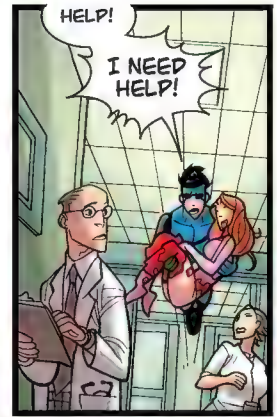
RIGHT?

OKAY, GUYS--CAN WE PLEASE SHUT HIM UP?













THE NATIONAL GUARD IS OFFERING TO SHELTER PEOPLE AT THE BASE.

NO--WE'LL BE FINE HERE. I DON'T WANT TO BE LOCKED AWAY AS LONG AS THEY'RE STILL BROADCASTING UPDATES.



WAKE UP, AMANDA-- PLEASE BE OKAY--

MONSTER GIRL!



WHERE'S DARKWING?

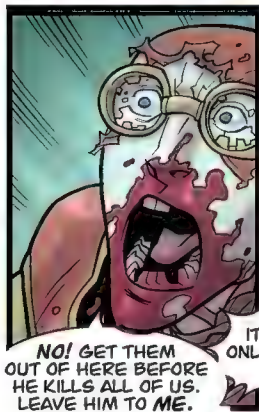
HE'S NOT HERE--THAT MADMAN MUST HAVE KILLED HIM, TRAPPING HIMSELF IN THE SHADOWVERSE... HE SAVED US.

DARKWING SACRIFICED HIMSELF TO SAVE US.



JUST FIX HER! PLEASE!

FIX HER!



NO! GET THEM OUT OF HERE BEFORE HE KILLS ALL OF US. LEAVE HIM TO ME.

IT'S THE ONLY WAY-- GO!



NO! GO BACK!

WE CAN'T LEAVE HIM!!



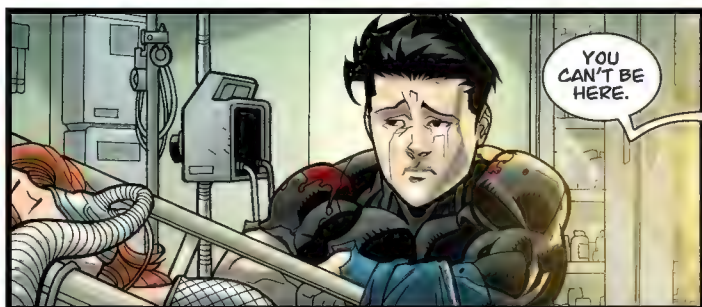
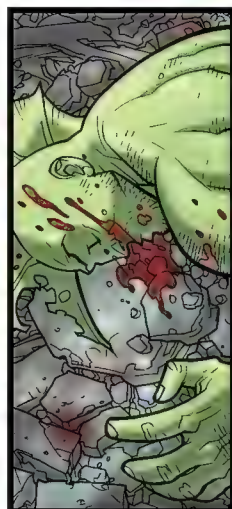
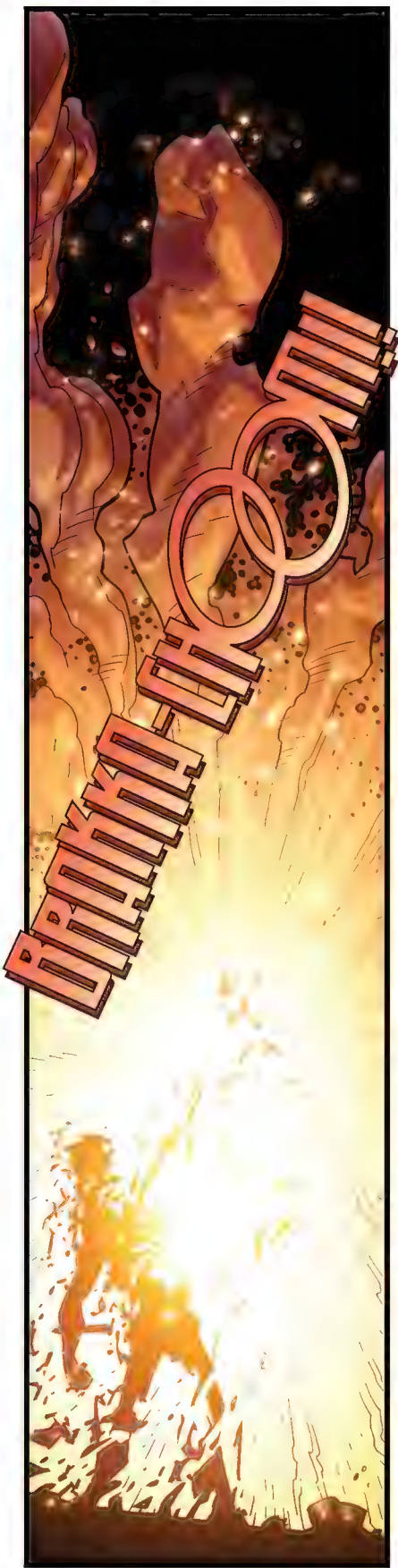
THAT WAS A FUTILE GESTURE, REX. I'M GOING TO POP YOUR HEAD OFF AND THEN FLY OFF TO MURDER ALL THREE OF THEM.

WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO ACCOMPLISH AGAINST ME? YOU'RE OUT OF BATONS AND GOLF BALLS AND WHATEVER YOU KEPT IN YOUR POCKETS--YOUR WRIST LAUNCHER IS SPENT--YOU'VE GOT NOTHING. NO WAY OF ATTACKING ME.

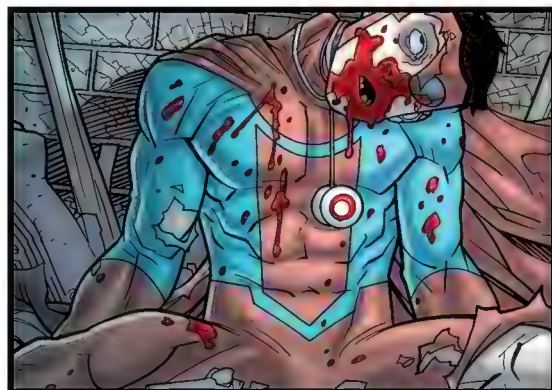
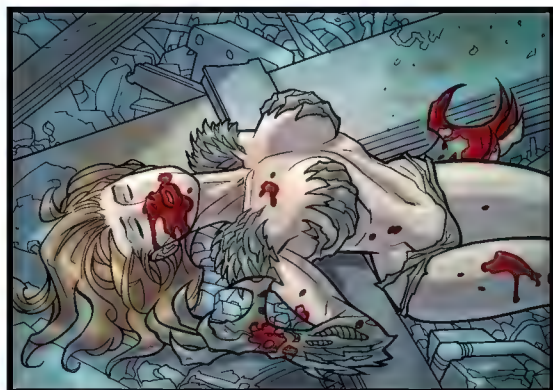
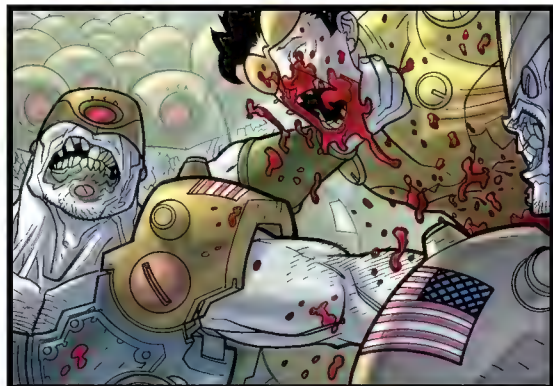
SO TELL ME--HOW ARE YOU GOING TO KILL ME? WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO CHARGE AND EXPLODE?

MY SKELETON.



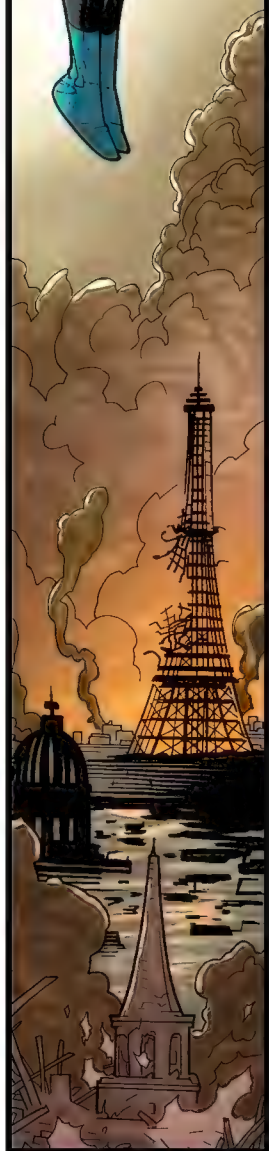
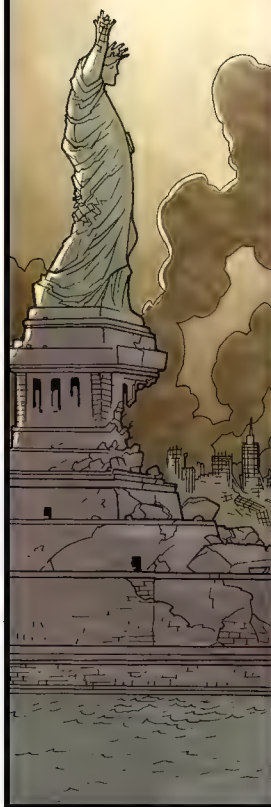
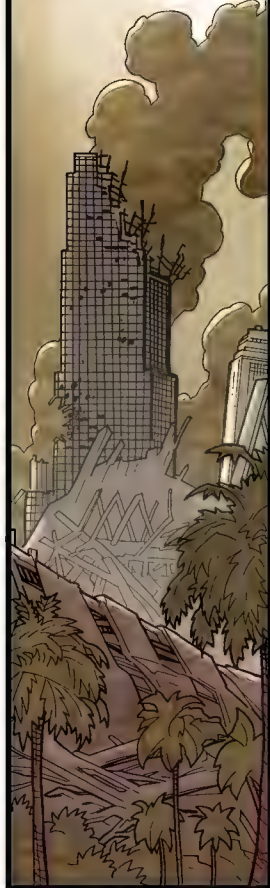
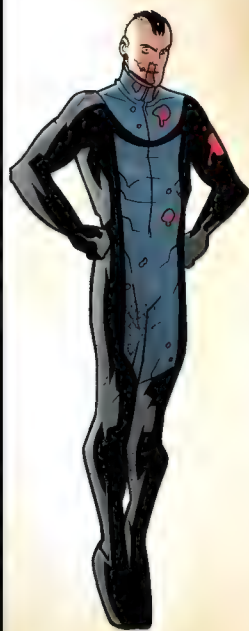
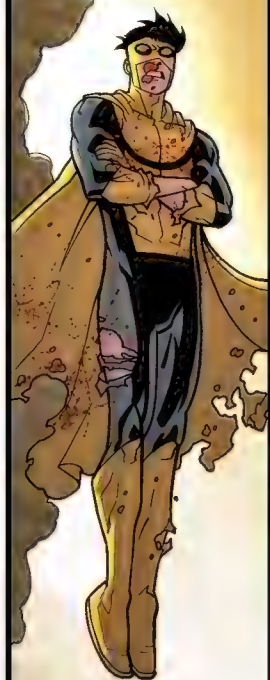




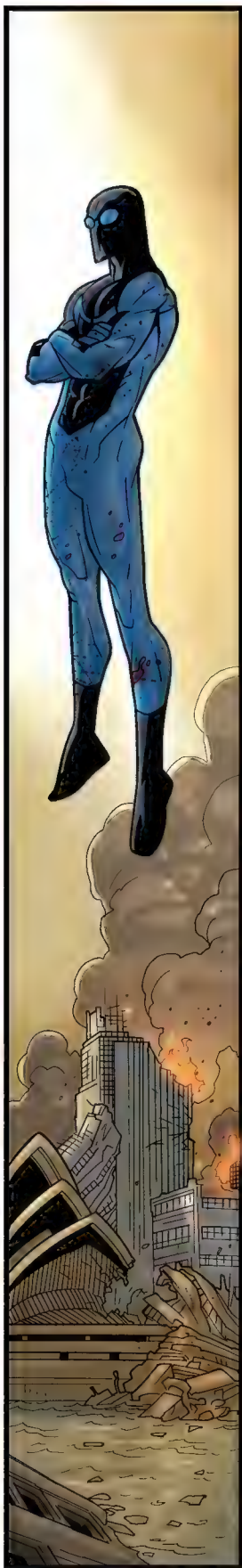
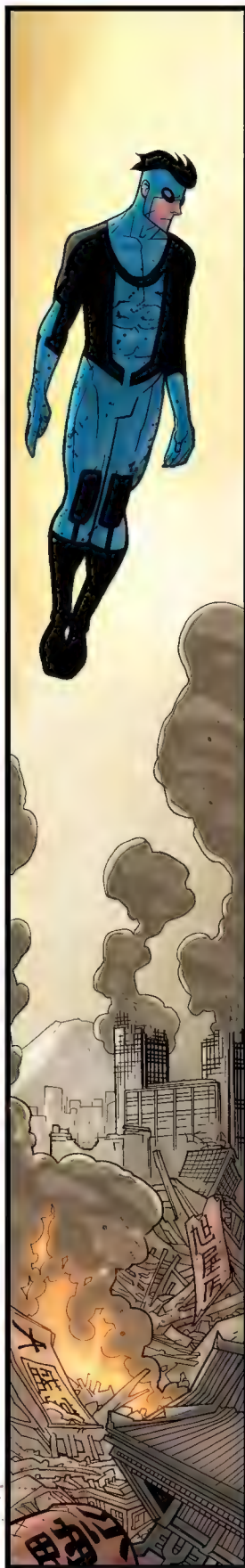




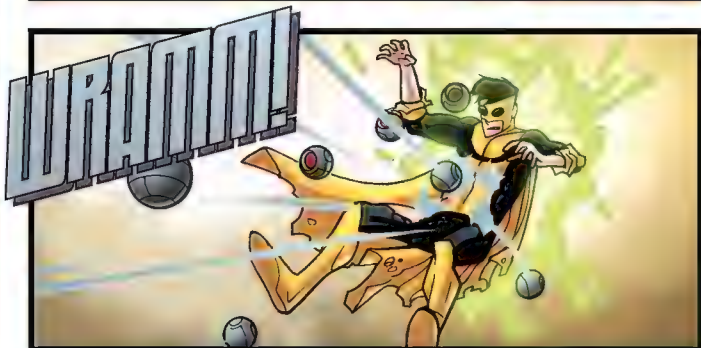
DAY THREE.















HOW DISAPPOINTING.



ANGSTROM!  
YOU CAN'T  
STRAND US  
HERE!!

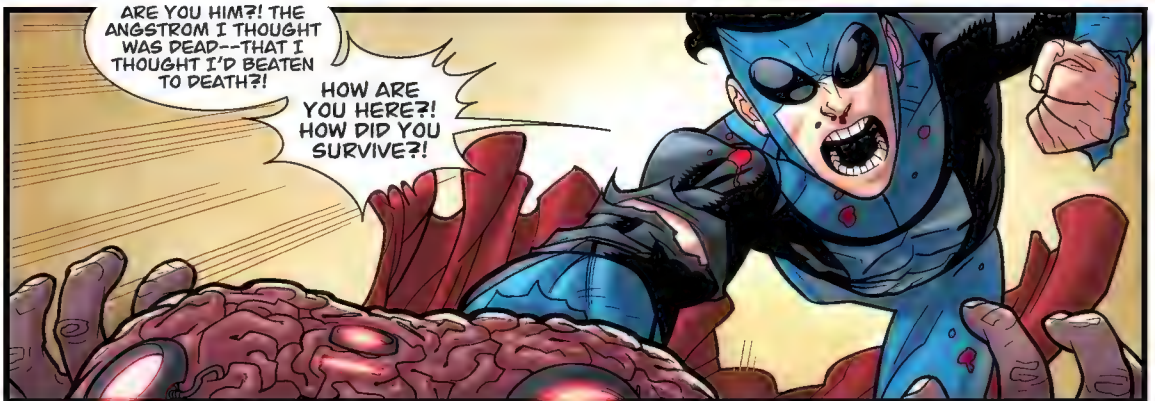
WE WILL  
FIND A WAY  
OUT OF HERE!  
WE WILL FIND  
YOU--AND WE  
WILL KILL  
YOU!



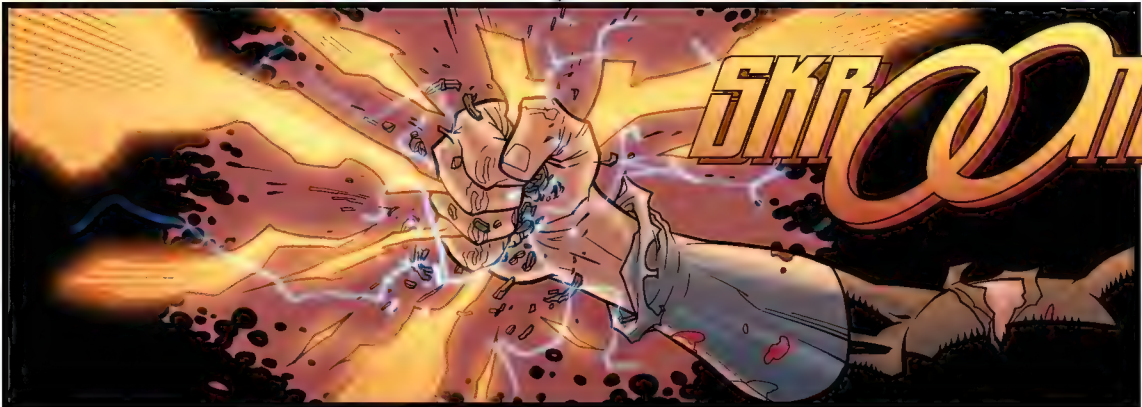
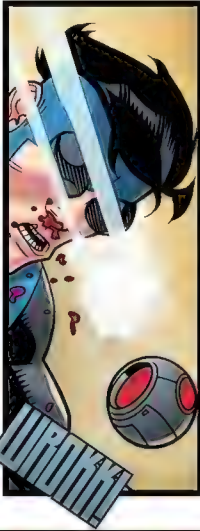
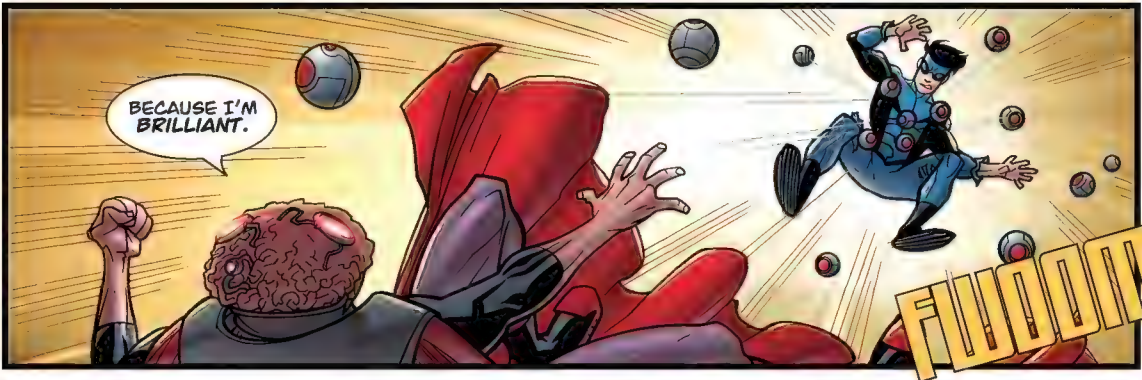
YOU!  
I KNEW  
IT WAS  
YOU!!

OH,  
GOOD,  
YOU CAME  
TO ME.

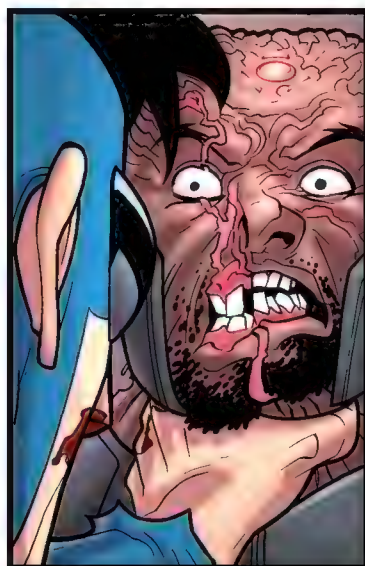
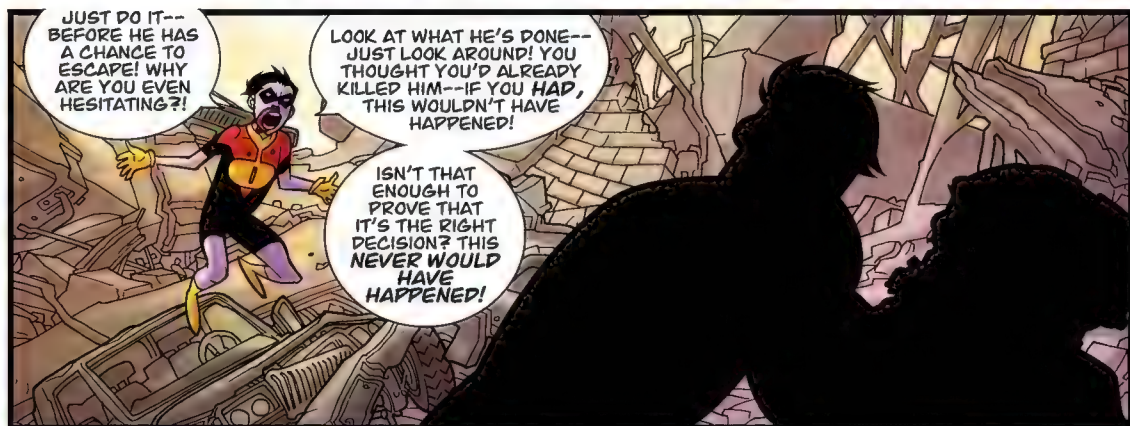
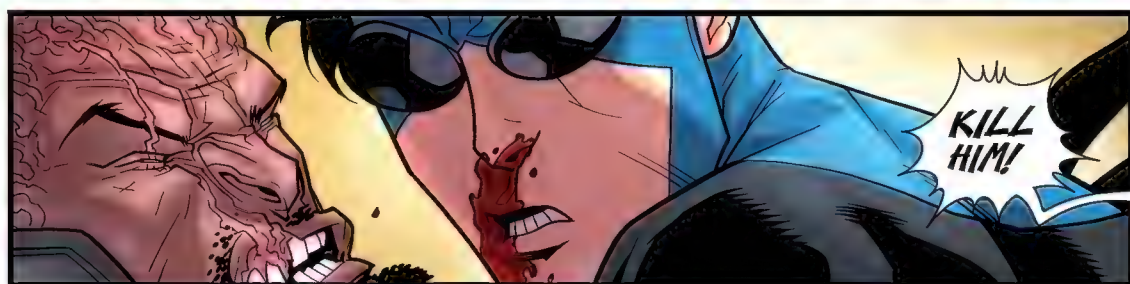
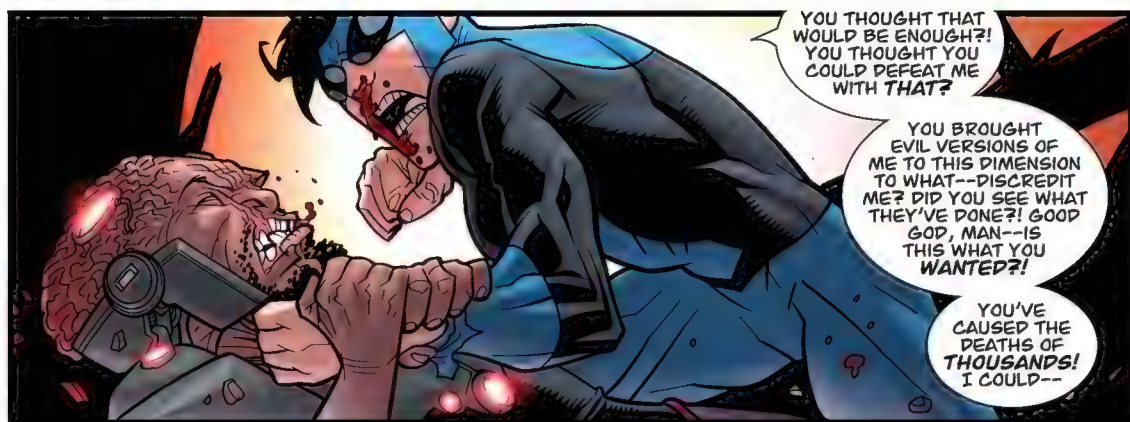








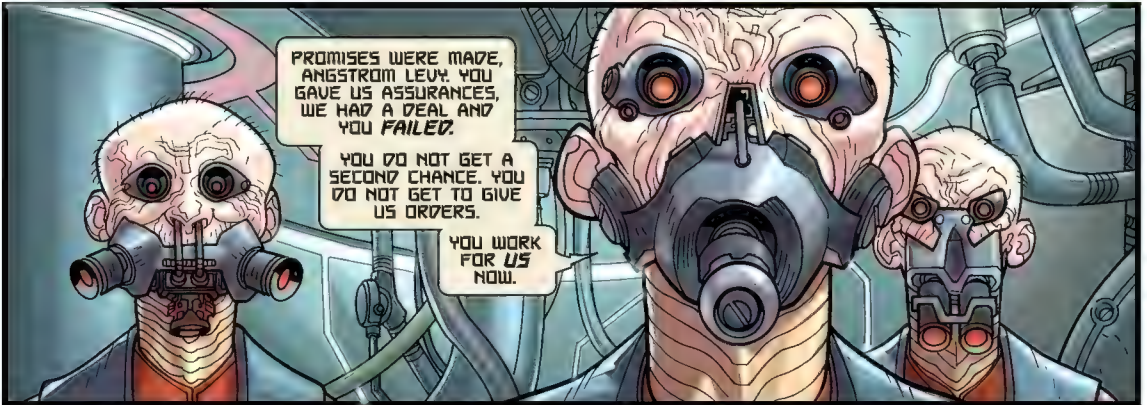
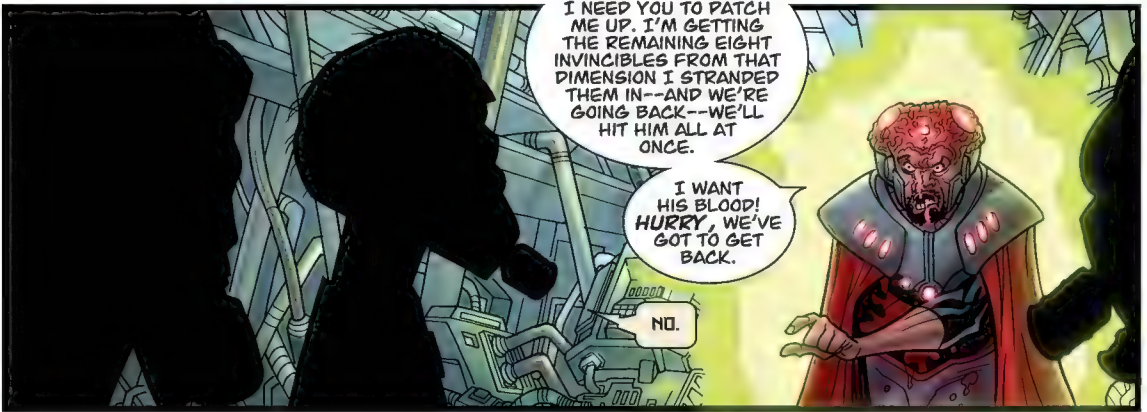




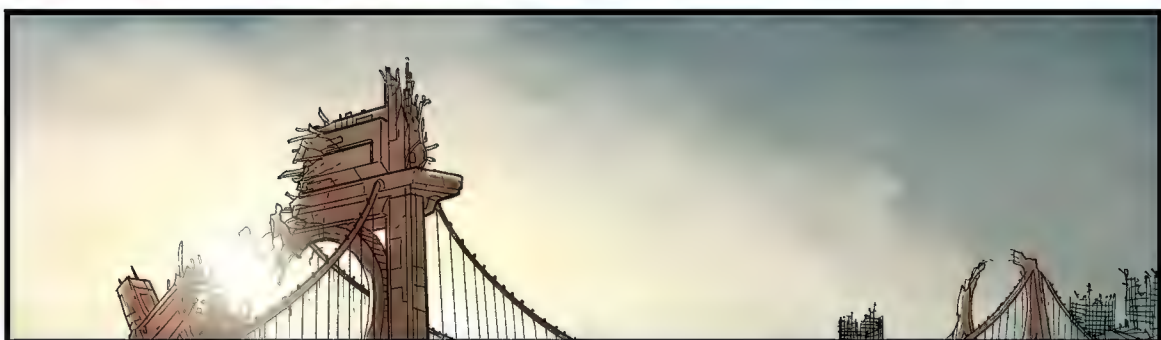
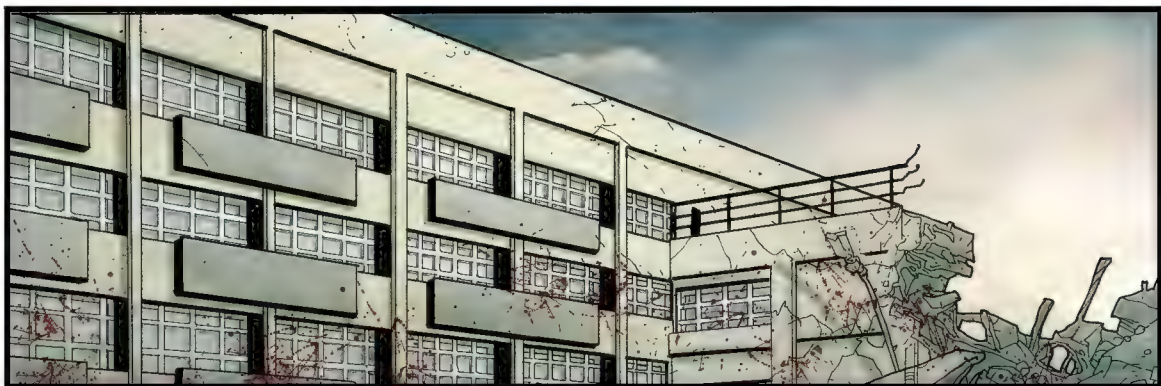
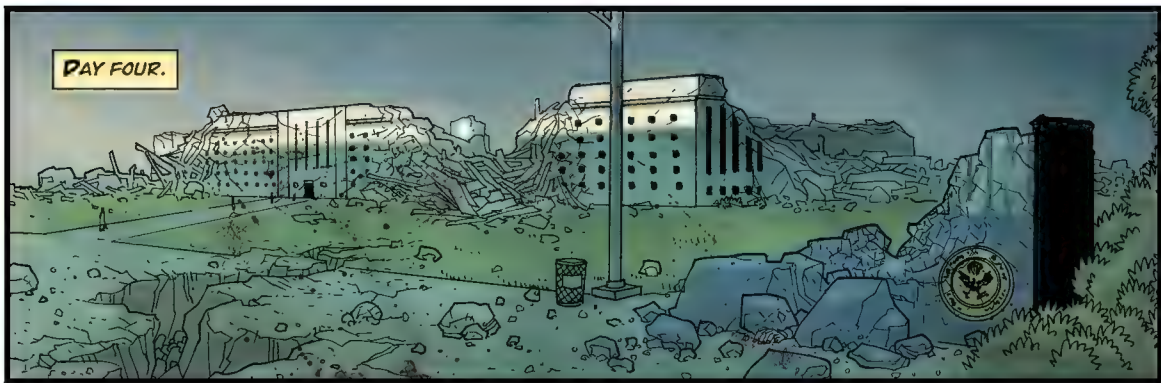
















MY  
GOD...



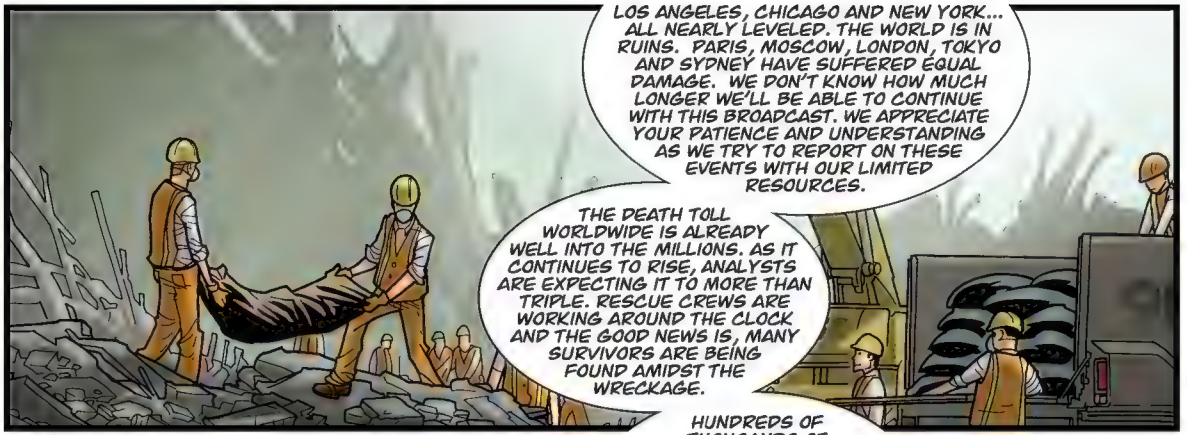




# CHAPTER 61







LOS ANGELES, CHICAGO AND NEW YORK... ALL NEARLY LEVELLED. THE WORLD IS IN RUINS. PARIS, MOSCOW, LONDON, TOKYO AND SYDNEY HAVE SUFFERED EQUAL DAMAGE. WE DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH LONGER WE'LL BE ABLE TO CONTINUE WITH THIS BROADCAST. WE APPRECIATE YOUR PATIENCE AND UNDERSTANDING AS WE TRY TO REPORT ON THESE EVENTS WITH OUR LIMITED RESOURCES.

THE DEATH TOLL WORLDWIDE IS ALREADY WELL INTO THE MILLIONS. AS IT CONTINUES TO RISE, ANALYSTS ARE EXPECTING IT TO MORE THAN TRIPLE. RESCUE CREWS ARE WORKING AROUND THE CLOCK AND THE GOOD NEWS IS, MANY SURVIVORS ARE BEING FOUND AMIDST THE WRECKAGE.

HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES HAVE BEEN DISPLACED BY THE EVENTS OF THE PAST FEW DAYS. MAKESHIFT REFUGEE CAMPS LIKE THIS ONE JUST OUTSIDE OF NEW YORK CITY ARE SPRINGING UP ALL OVER THE WORLD.

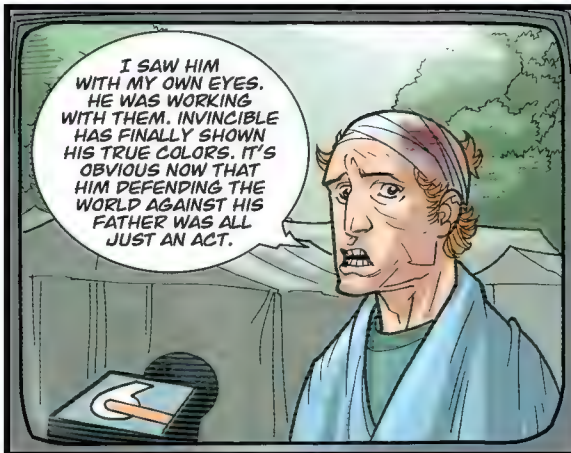
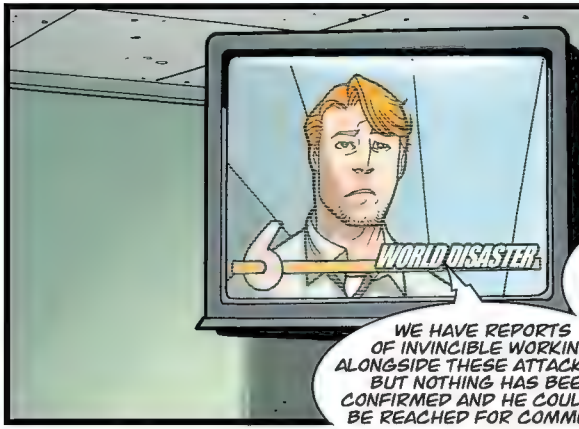
THE RED CROSS IS REPORTING THAT THIS DISASTER FAR EXCEEDS THEIR CAPABILITIES, AND THEY'RE ASKING FOR EVERY CITIZEN IN A POSITION TO HELP TO DO SO.

ALL OF THIS STILL LEAVES US WITH THE QUESTION-- WHY? WHY HAS THIS HAPPENED? WHILE THE ANSWER TO THAT QUESTION MAY NEVER COME, THE ATTACKERS HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED AS MULTIPLE VERSIONS OF THE SUPERHERO KNOWN AS INVINCIBLE.

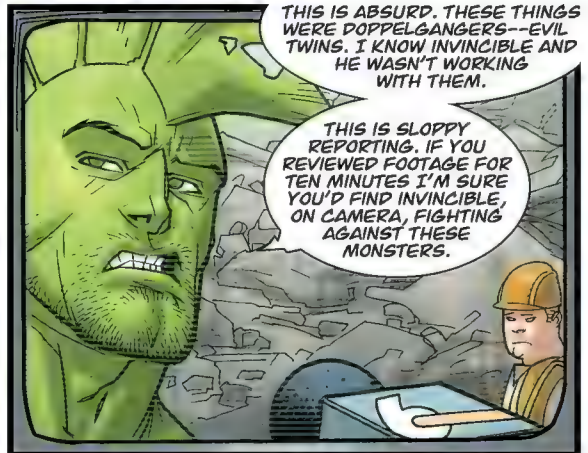
INVINCIBLE, AS EVERYONE WILL REMEMBER, WAS THE SON OF OMNI-MAN--THE SUPERHERO TURNED SUPER-VILLAIN WHO TRIED TO TAKE OVER THE WORLD UNTIL HE WAS THWARTED BY HIS SON AND THEN DISAPPEARED, NEVER TO BE SEEN AGAIN.

SUSPICIONS HAVE ALWAYS RUN WILD WITH SOME BELIEVING INVINCIBLE WAS ACTUALLY WORKING WITH OMNI-MAN--WITH PLANS TO CONQUER THE WORLD AT A LATTER TIME.

WE HAVE REPORTS OF INVINCIBLE WORKING ALONGSIDE THESE ATTACKERS, BUT NOTHING HAS BEEN CONFIRMED AND HE COULDN'T BE REACHED FOR COMMENT.



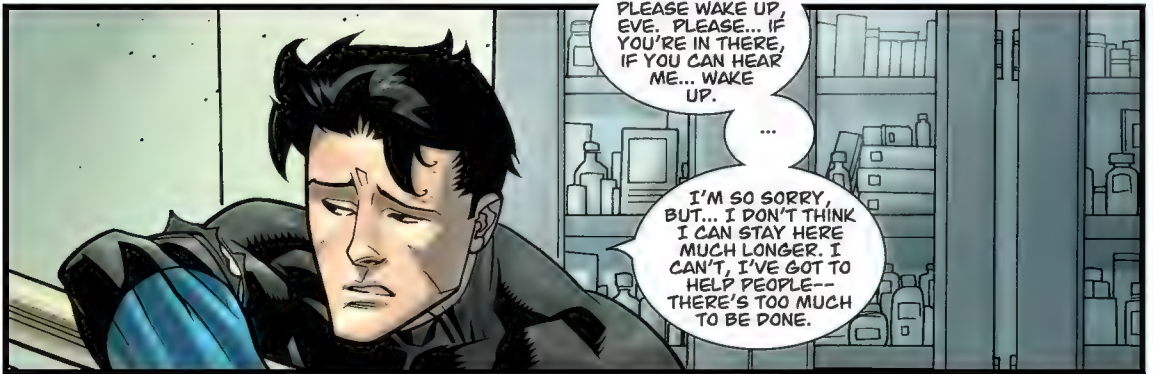
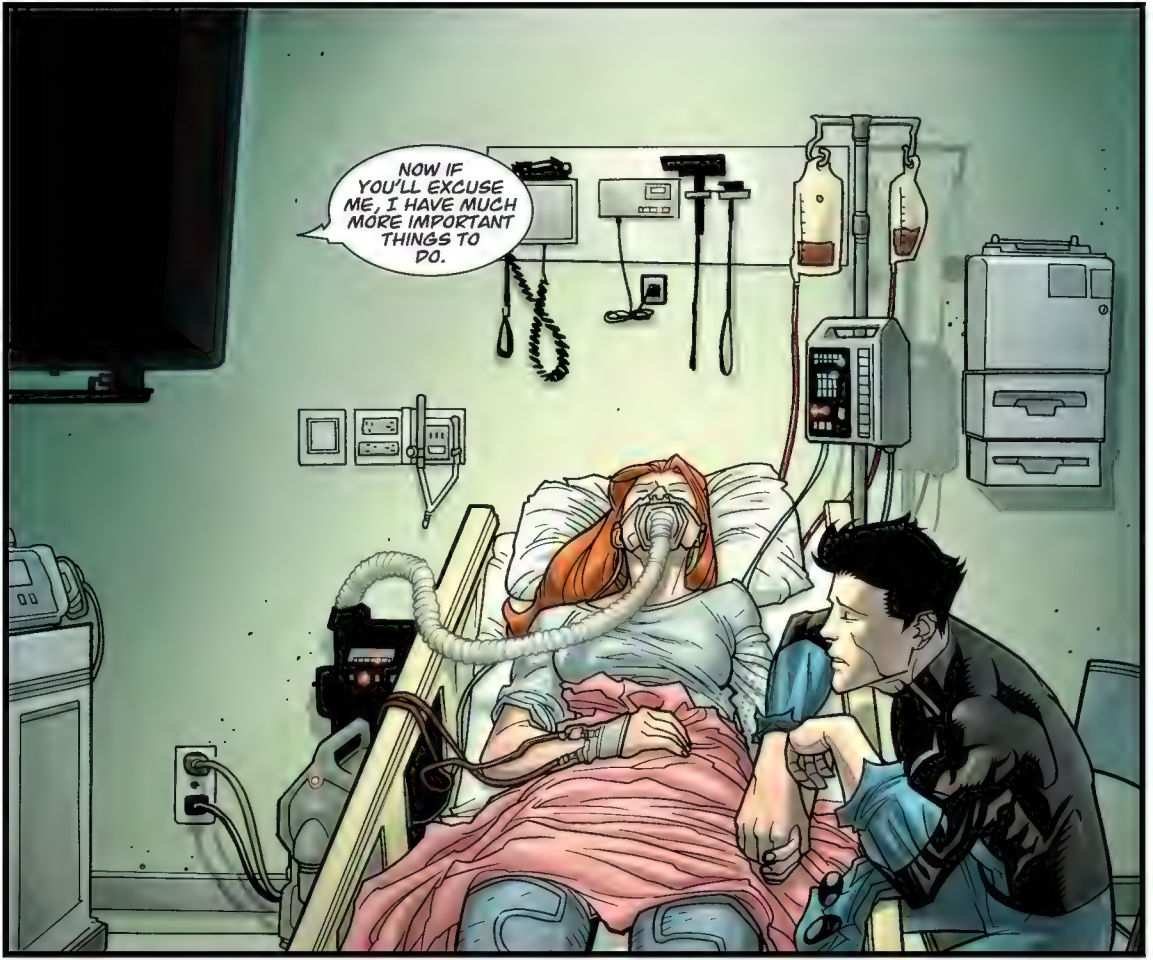
I SAW HIM WITH MY OWN EYES. HE WAS WORKING WITH THEM. INVINCIBLE HAS FINALLY SHOWN HIS TRUE COLORS. IT'S OBVIOUS NOW THAT HIM DEFENDING THE WORLD AGAINST HIS FATHER WAS ALL JUST AN ACT.



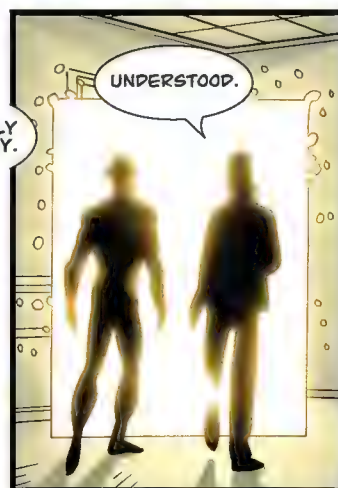
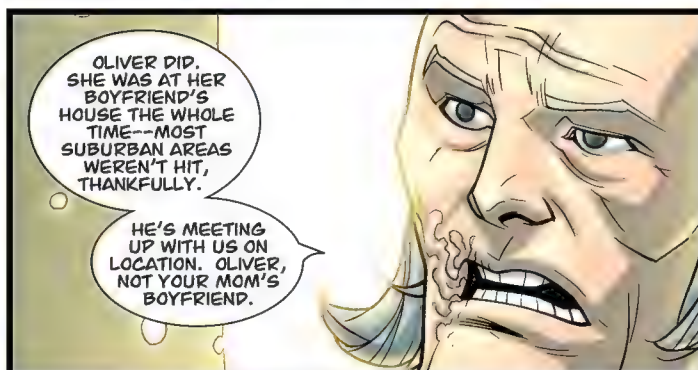
THIS IS ABSURD. THESE THINGS WERE DOPPELGANGERS--EVIL TWINS. I KNOW INVINCIBLE AND HE WASN'T WORKING WITH THEM.

THIS IS SLOPPY REPORTING. IF YOU REVIEWED FOOTAGE FOR TEN MINUTES I'M SURE YOU'D FIND INVINCIBLE, ON CAMERA, FIGHTING AGAINST THESE MONSTERS.





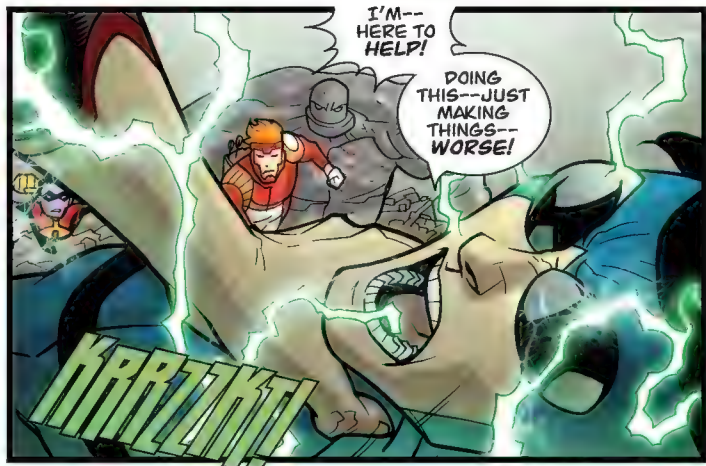








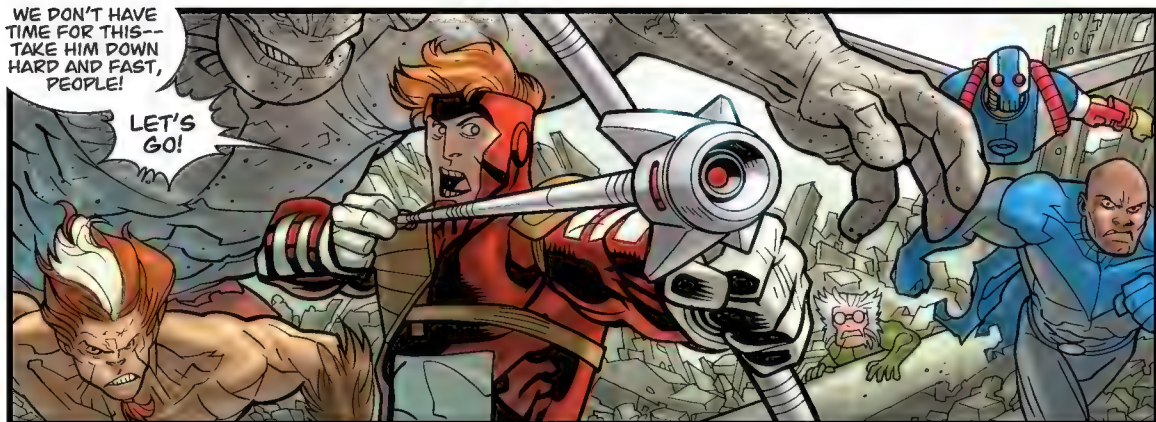




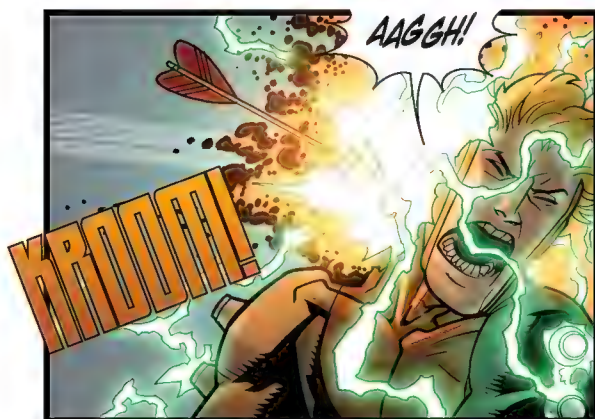


WE DON'T HAVE  
TIME FOR THIS--  
TAKE HIM DOWN  
HARD AND FAST,  
PEOPLE!

LET'S  
GO!



AAGGH!



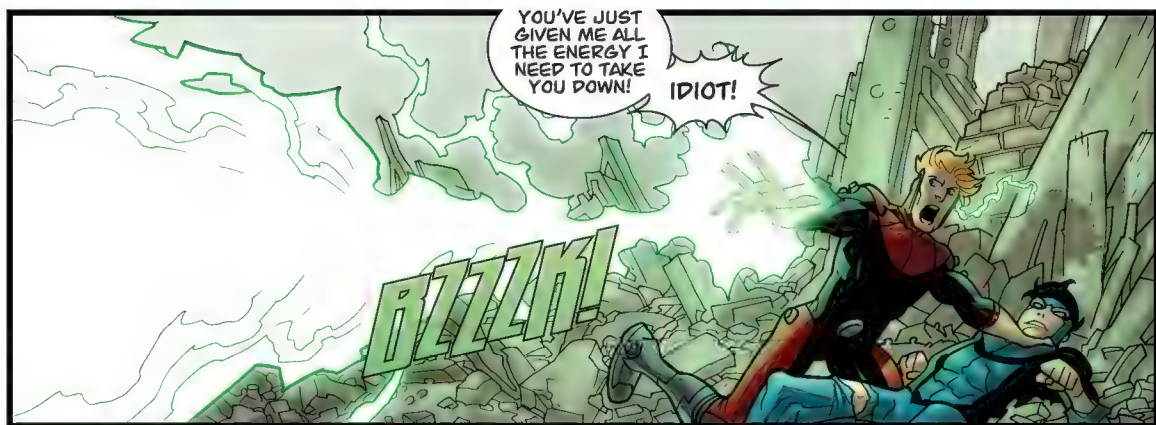
THINK THEY'VE  
GOT THIS ONE  
COVERED, KID  
THOR.

C'MON,  
THERE'S  
WORK TO  
BE DONE,  
LIVES TO  
SAVE.



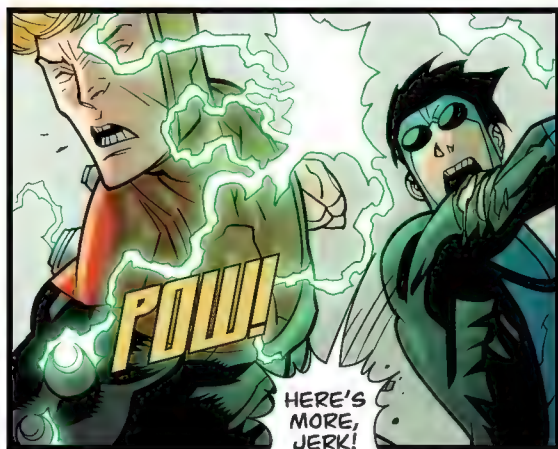
YOU'VE JUST  
GIVEN ME ALL  
THE ENERGY I  
NEED TO TAKE  
YOU DOWN!

IDIOT!



POW!

HERE'S  
MORE,  
JERK!

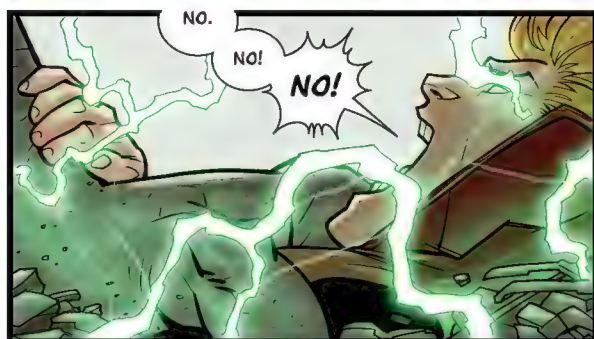
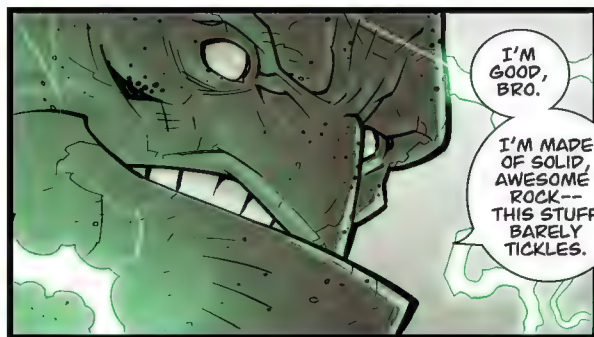
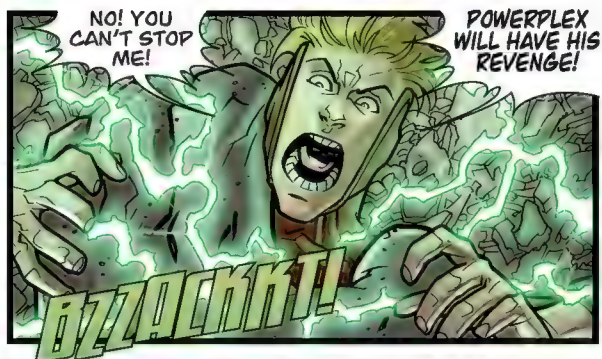


QUICK--  
SOMEONE  
PIN HIM  
DOWN!

DON'T  
LET HIM  
MOVE!



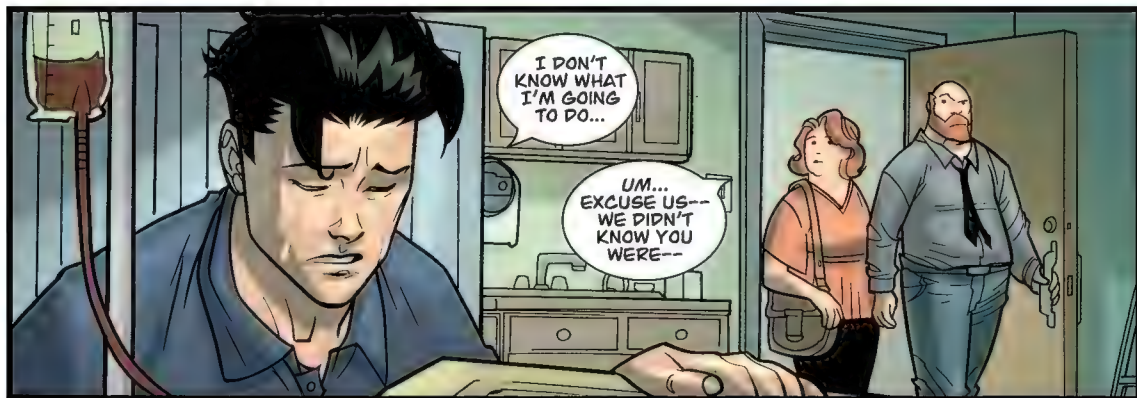
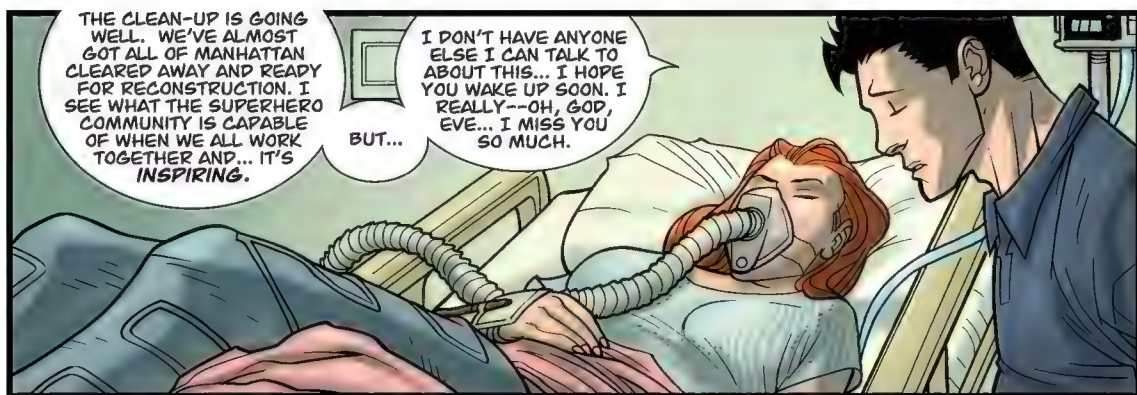




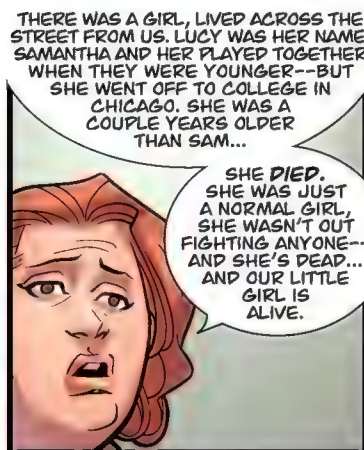
















WHAT'S LEFT OF  
THE APARTMENT OF  
FORMER ASTRONAUT,  
RUS LIVINGSTON.



THIRD  
FLOOR'S  
CLEAR.

YEAH--  
I THINK  
THAT'S  
IT.



DID YOU  
SEE  
THAT?!

YEAH!  
WHAT THE  
HELL  
WAS THAT  
THING?!



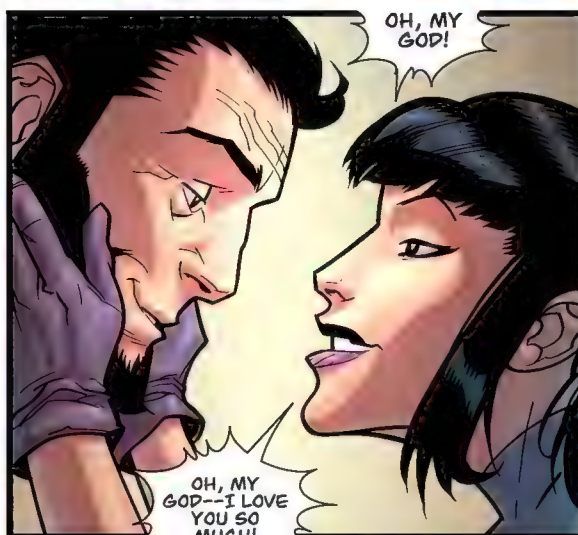
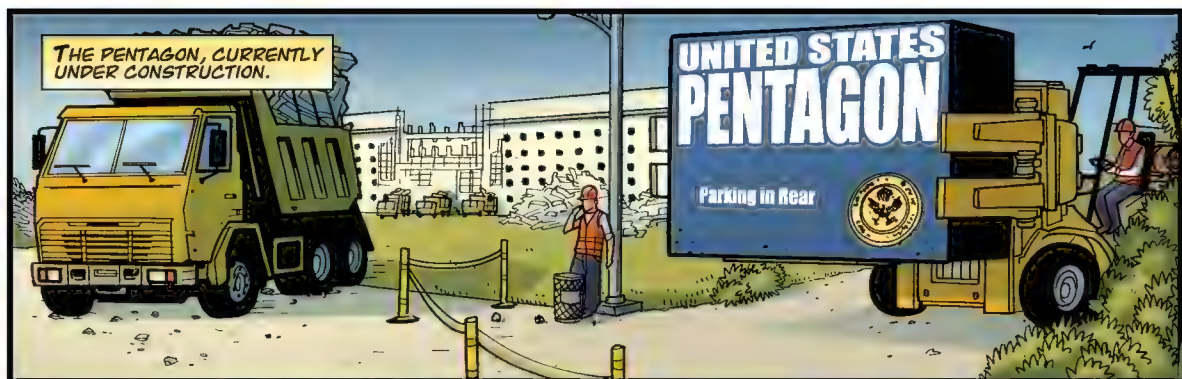
I NEED A  
NEW PLACE  
TO LIVE--A  
BIGGER  
PLACE.

YOU WILL  
HELP ME  
FIND IT.

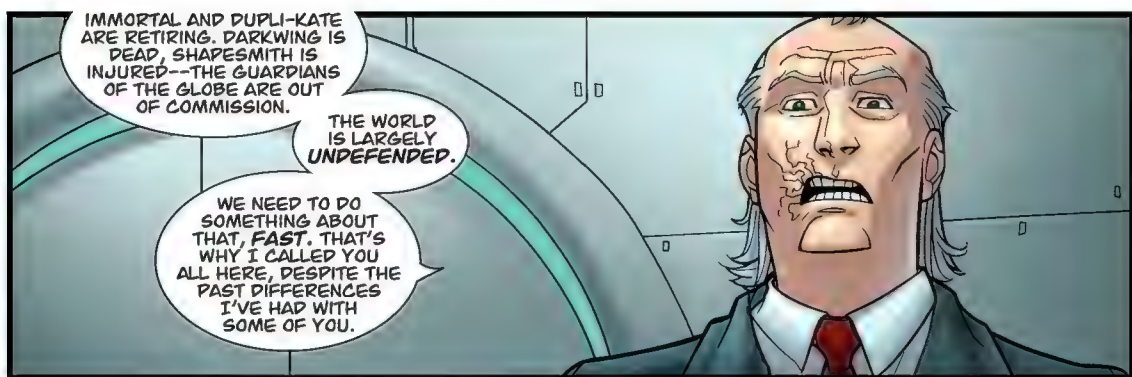
GRAAAGH!

YEEAAGH!!









IMMORTAL AND DUPLI-KATE ARE RETIRING. DARKWING IS DEAD, SHAPESMITH IS INJURED--THE GUARDIANS OF THE GLOBE ARE OUT OF COMMISSION.

THE WORLD IS LARGELY UNDEFENDED.

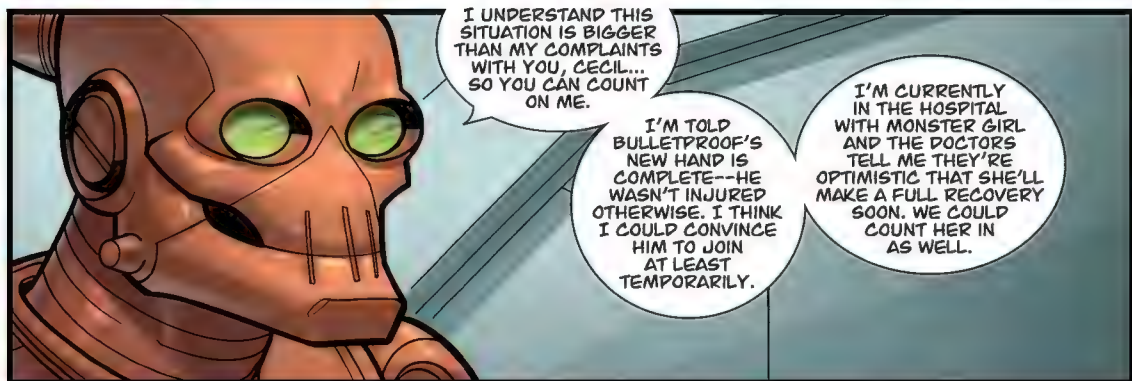
WE NEED TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THAT, **FAST**. THAT'S WHY I CALLED YOU ALL HERE, DESPITE THE PAST DIFFERENCES I'VE HAD WITH SOME OF YOU.



SHAPESMITH SHOULD BE BACK UP TO SPEED SOON, HE HAS SOMETHING HE CALLS A "**CORE**" AND AS LONG AS THAT'S NOT DAMAGED HE SAYS HE'LL BE FINE. SO HE WAS LUCKY.

MORE LIKE **WE** WERE LUCKY. IF WE'RE TALKING ABOUT FORMING A NEW TEAM, WE HAVE VERY FEW OPTIONS RIGHT NOW.

THAT'S THE MAIN ISSUE-- WE NEED A NEW TEAM **RIGHT NOW**. I DON'T THINK THE ENEMIES OF THE WORLD WILL BE KIND ENOUGH TO TAKE A BREAK WHILE WE REBUILD.



I UNDERSTAND THIS SITUATION IS BIGGER THAN MY COMPLAINTS WITH YOU, CECIL... SO YOU CAN COUNT ON ME.

I'M TOLD BULLETPROOF'S NEW HAND IS COMPLETE--HE WASN'T INJURED OTHERWISE. I THINK I COULD CONVINCE HIM TO JOIN AT LEAST TEMPORARILY.

I'M CURRENTLY IN THE HOSPITAL WITH MONSTER GIRL AND THE DOCTORS TELL ME THEY'RE OPTIMISTIC THAT SHE'LL MAKE A FULL RECOVERY SOON. WE COULD COUNT HER IN AS WELL.



WHAT ABOUT REX SPLODE?



REX IS DEAD.



THERE'S NO TIME FOR THAT NOW.



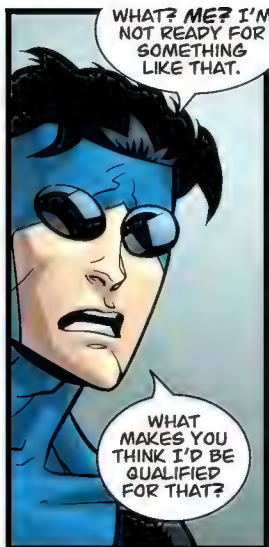
WE NEED TO GET THIS TEAM UP AND RUNNING BEFORE ANYONE REALIZES HOW VULNERABLE WE ARE.



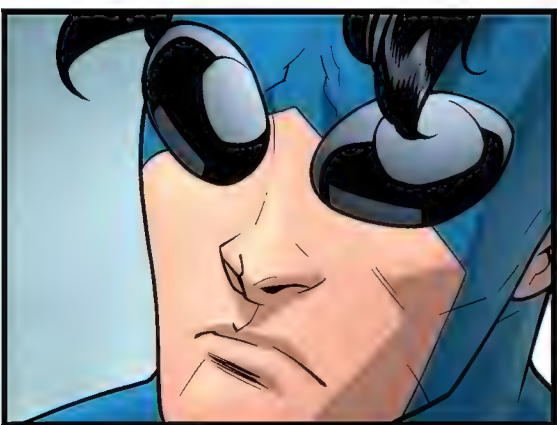
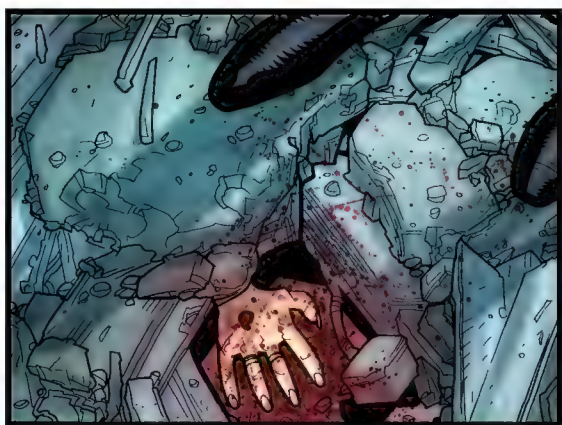
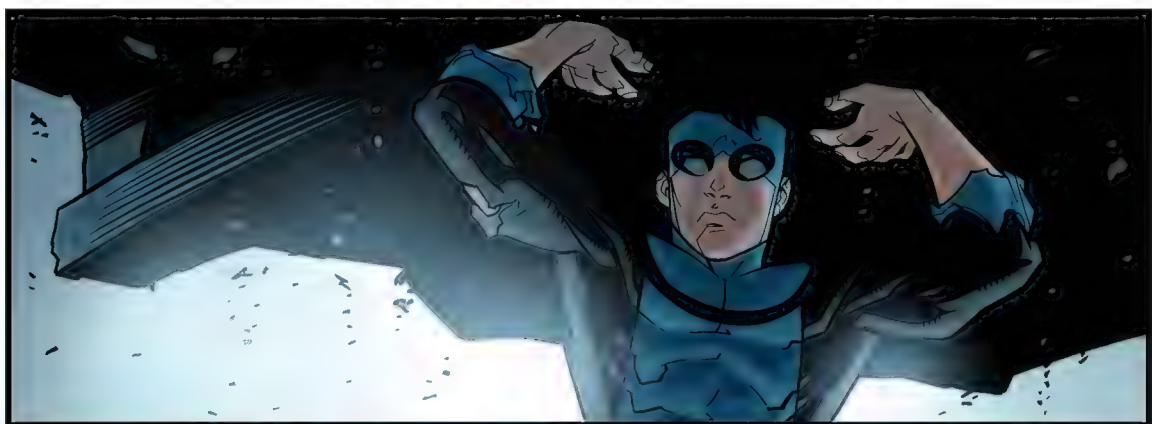
I DON'T FEEL COMFORTABLE WORKING FOR YOU UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES.

WHY AM I HERE?

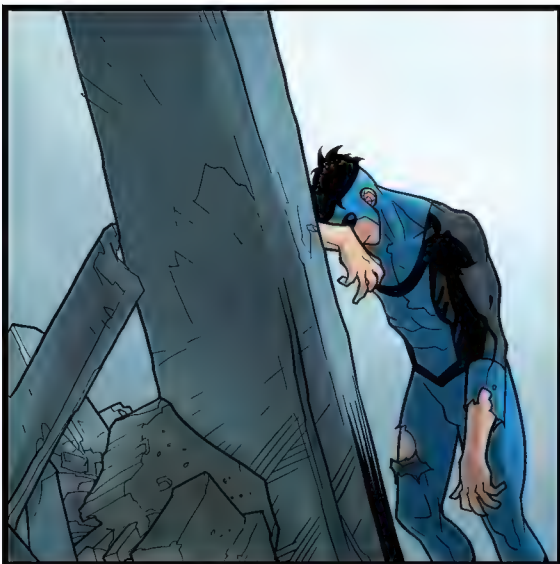
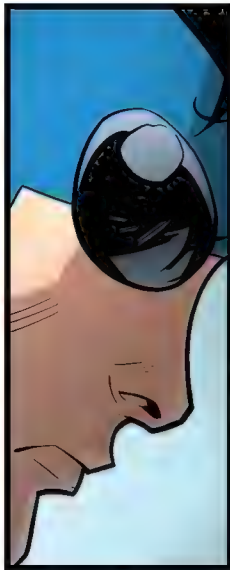
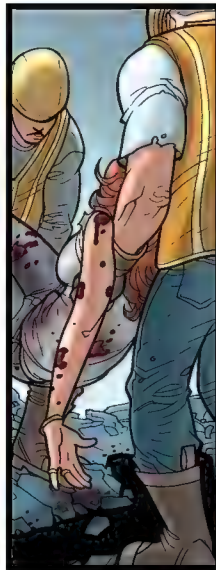
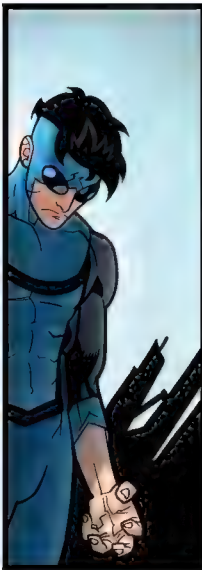
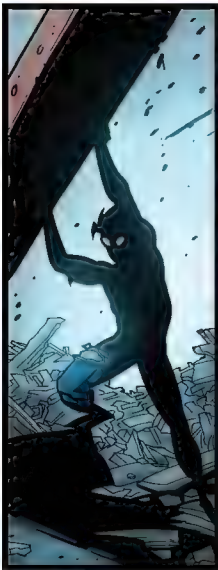
















YOU HAVE  
BEEN APPOINTED  
THE VILTRUMITE  
AGENT OF THIS  
PLANET, CHARGED  
WITH PREPARING IT  
FOR EVENTUAL  
TAKEOVER BY  
OUR EMPIRE.

I AM HERE  
TO CONFIRM YOUR  
PROGRESS MADE  
TOWARD THAT TASK...  
IF THERE IS NONE,  
I WILL ASSUME  
YOUR DUTIES AND  
TAKE OVER.

IF YOU  
OPPOSE ME,  
I WILL KILL  
YOU.





THIS  
ISN'T A  
GOOD  
TIME.



MAYBE YOU DO NOT  
UNDERSTAND THE  
SITUATION. THE VILTRUM  
EMPIRE ANTICIPATED  
YOUR RESISTANCE--  
THAT IS WHY THEY  
SENT **ME**,  
SPECIFICALLY.

I AM  
**CONQUEST**. I  
HAVE NEVER FAILED  
TO ASSIMILATE A  
CHOSEN PLANET,  
NO MATTER ITS  
STRENGTH.

IF YOU  
CHOOSE TO  
OPPOSE ME,  
YOU WILL **NOT**  
SURVIVE.



MAYBE YOU DO  
NOT UNDERSTAND. I  
HAVE CAUSED **ALL**  
THE DESTRUCTION YOU  
SEE AROUND YOU. THE  
LIVES LOST ARE A  
DIRECT RESULT OF  
**MY** ACTIONS.

I CAN'T  
DESCRIBE THE  
GUILT, SHAME... AND  
MOST IMPORTANTLY  
**ANGER** THAT I  
FEEL RIGHT  
NOW.

ALL I HAVE  
THOUGHT ABOUT--  
THE ONLY THING  
I'VE WANTED SINCE  
ALL OF THIS  
HAPPENED...



...WAS SOMETHING  
TO HIT AS HARD  
AS I CAN.



VERY  
WELL.











# CHAPTER 62



Ryan + fco













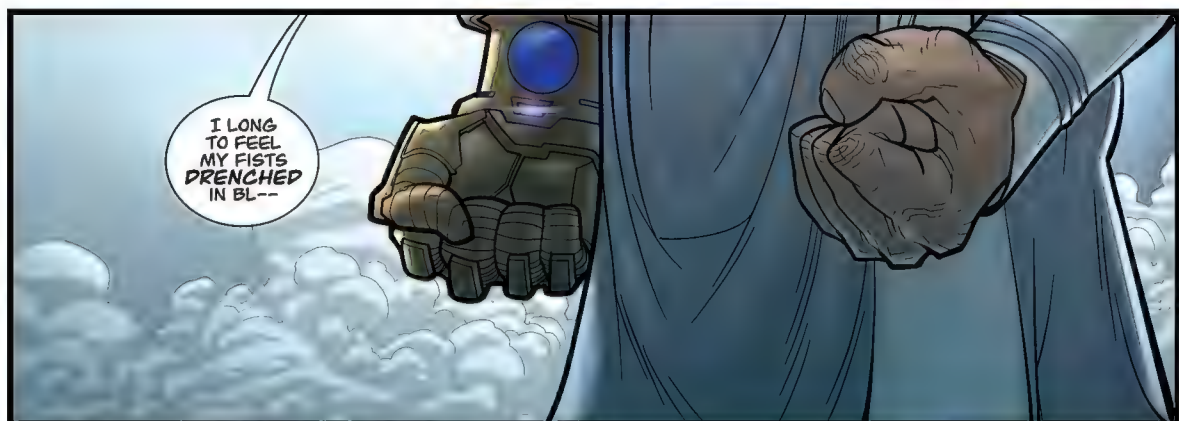
RIGHT NOW, ANISSA WOULD BE TELLING YOU ABOUT HOW THE VILTRUM EMPIRE WOULD TURN THIS PLANET INTO A UTOPIA. SHE'D TELL YOU YOU'RE A FOOL TO TRY AND PREVENT THIS--THAT WE WOULD BE HELPING THE PEOPLE YOU BELIEVE YOU ARE PROTECTING FROM US.

I WILL NOT TELL YOU ANY SUCH THING.

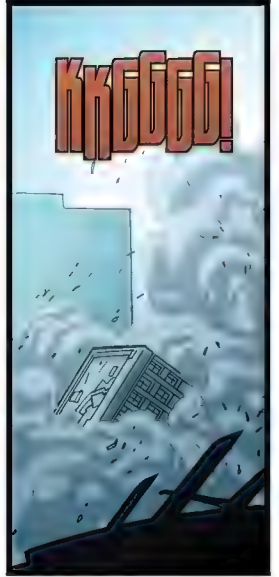
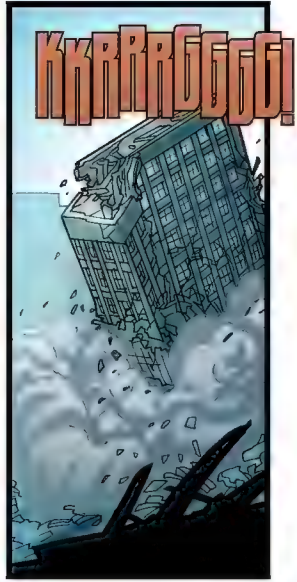
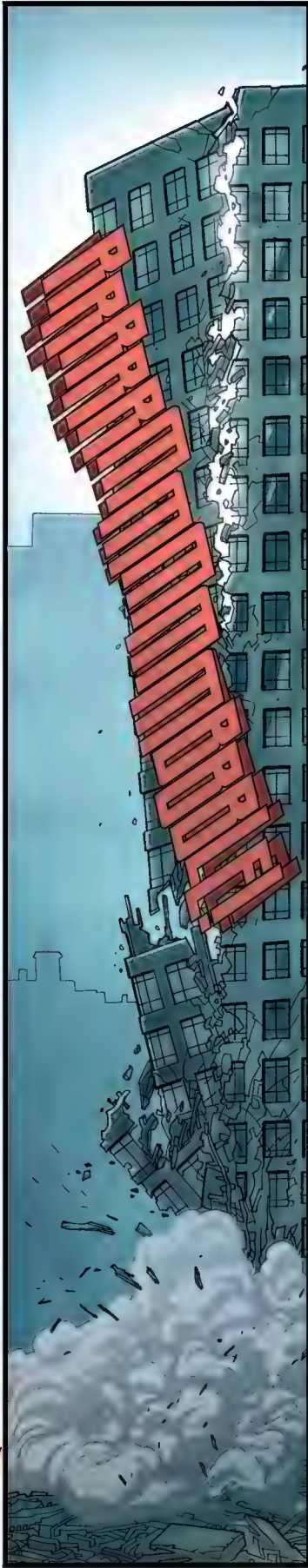
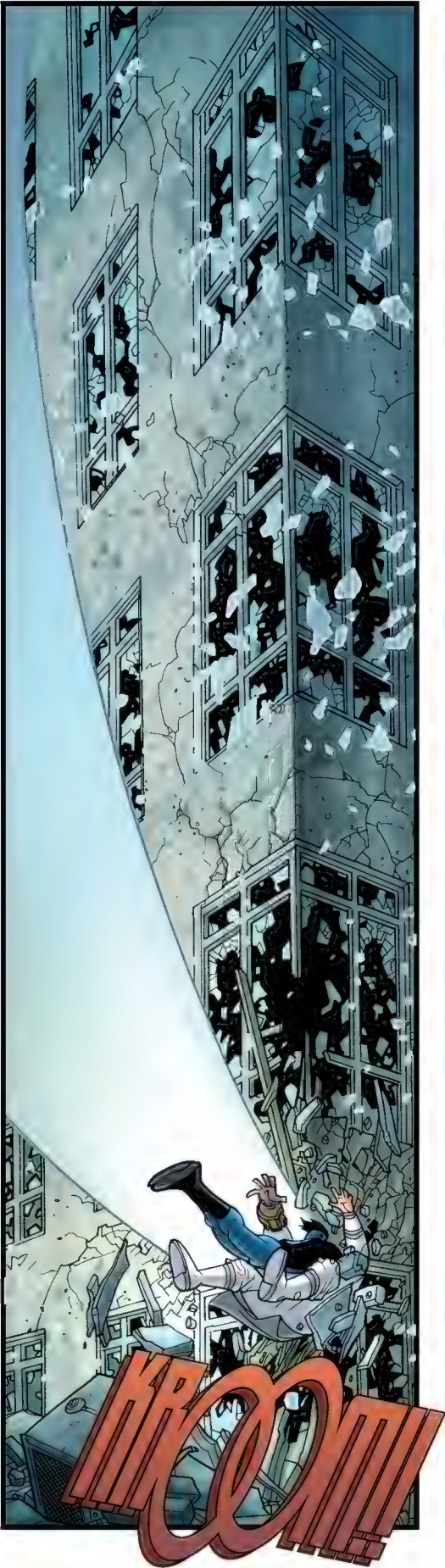
THE TRUTH IS, I WANT YOU TO RESIST. I'M NOT HERE BECAUSE I WANT TO SPREAD THE VILTRUM EMPIRE. I'M NOT HERE BECAUSE I BELIEVE IN ONE CAUSE OR THE OTHER, OR THAT I'M FULFILLING SOME KIND OF HONORABLE DUTY.

I'M HERE BECAUSE I ENJOY THIS.





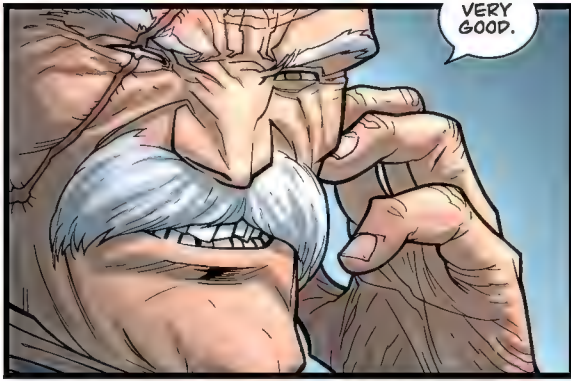








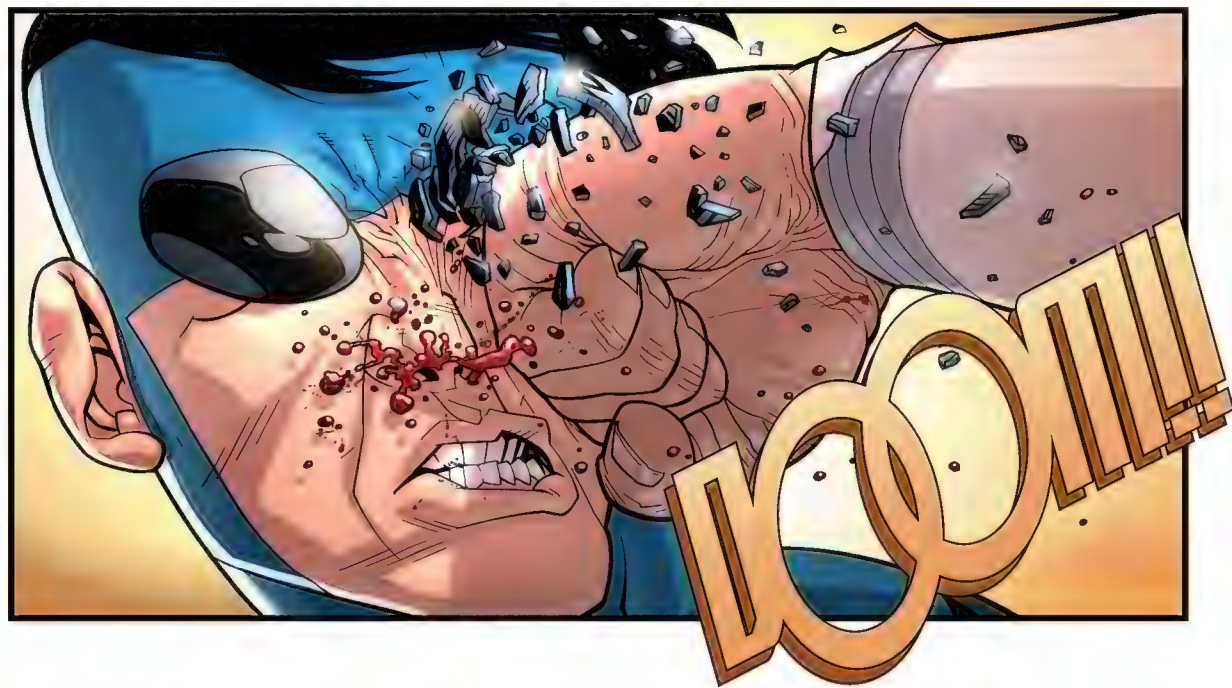
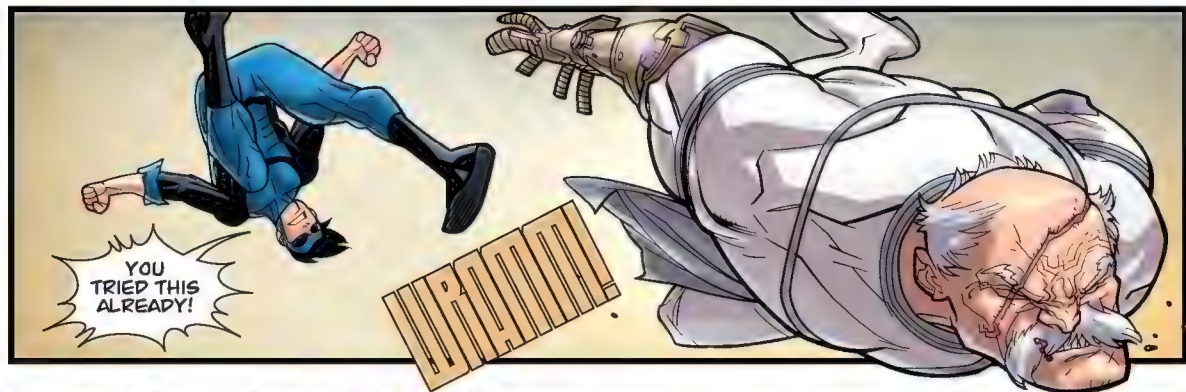
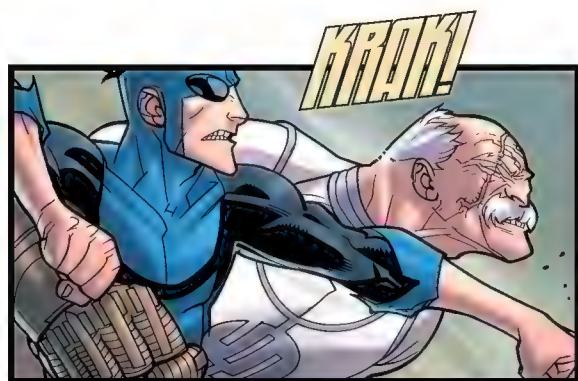




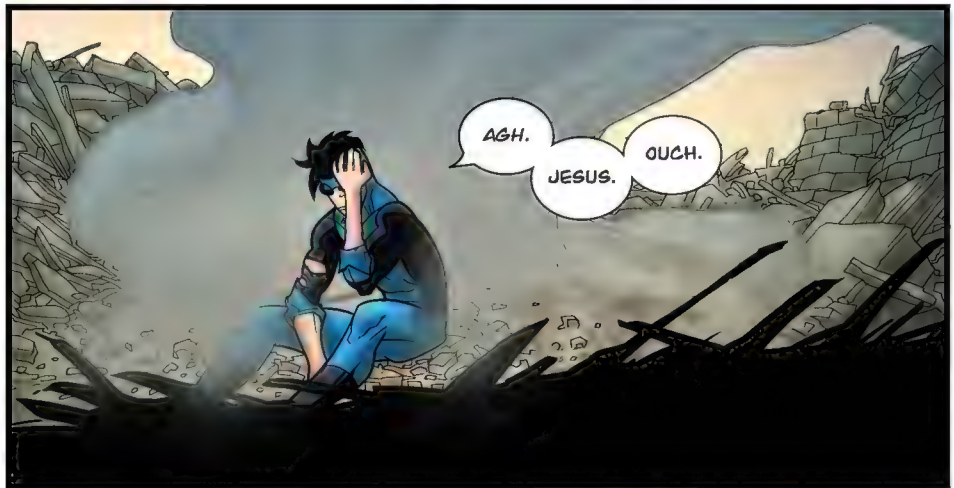
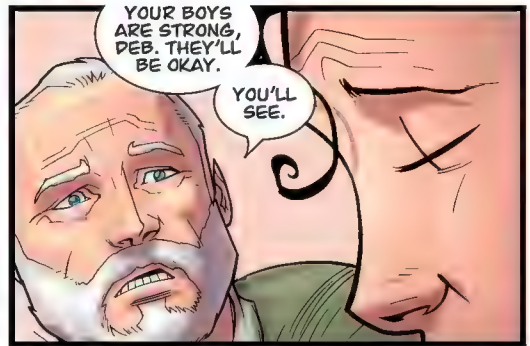




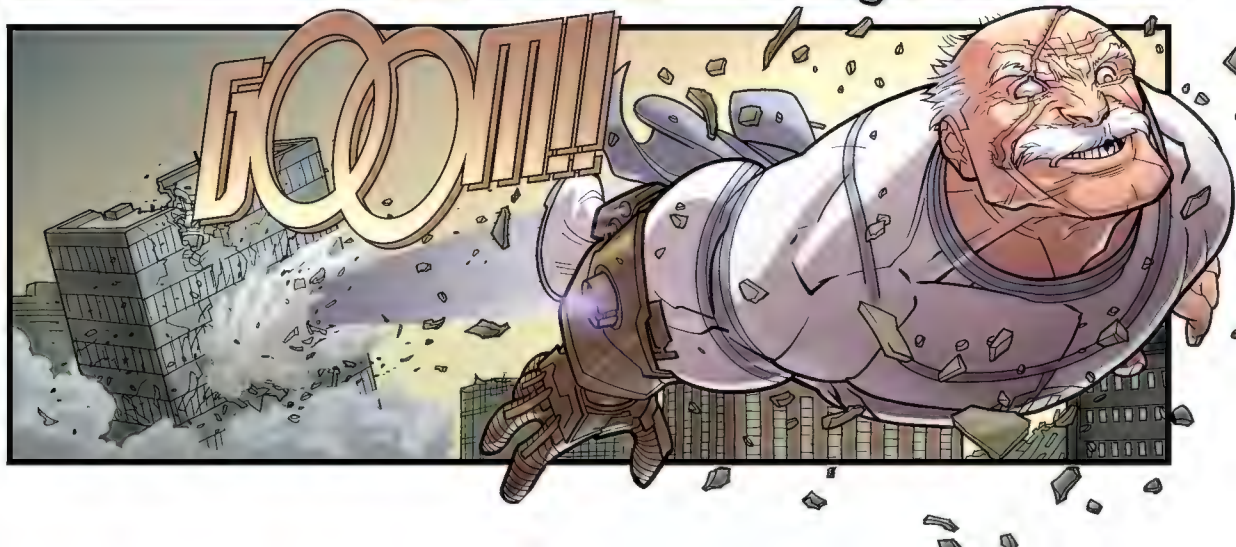
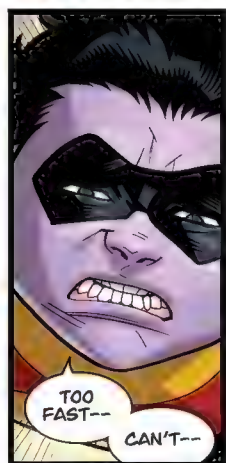
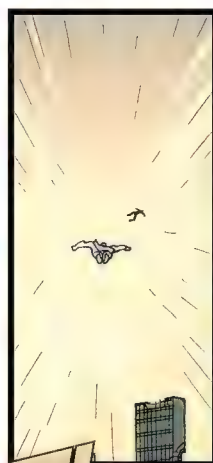




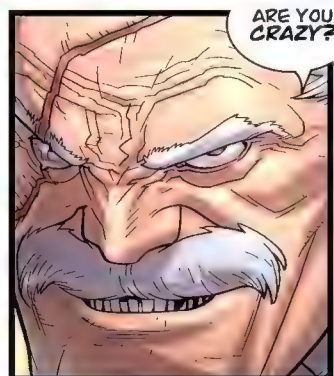
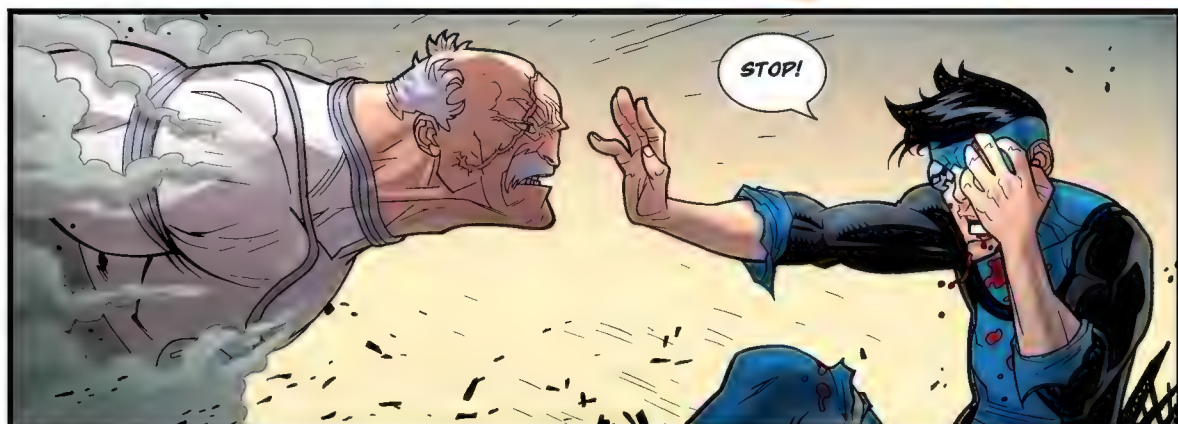




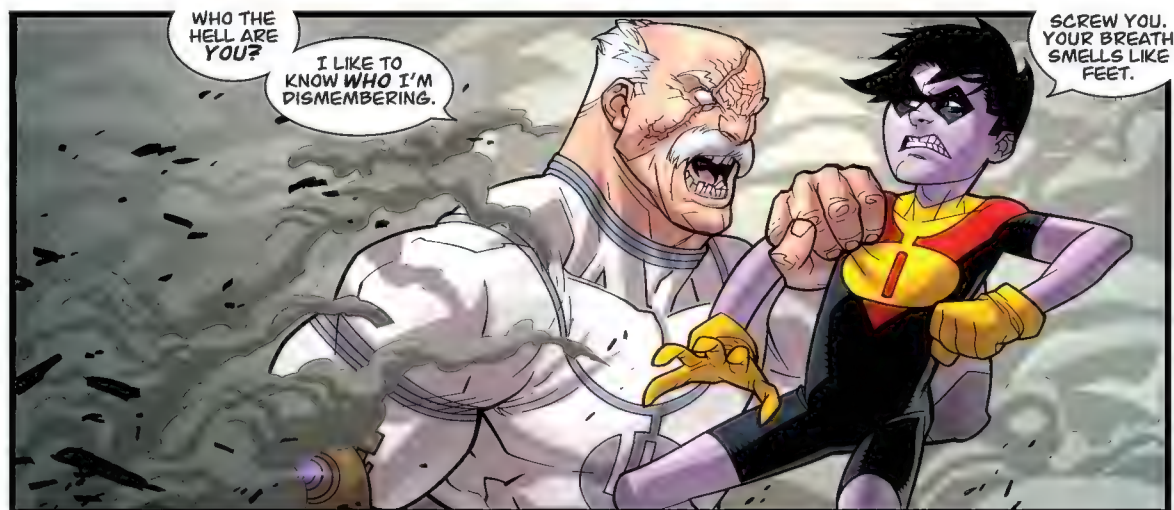




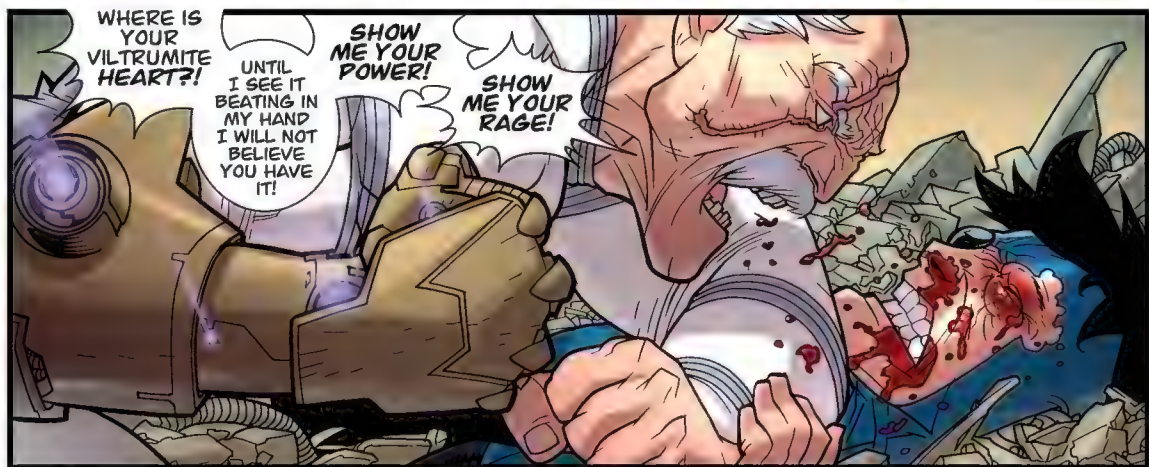




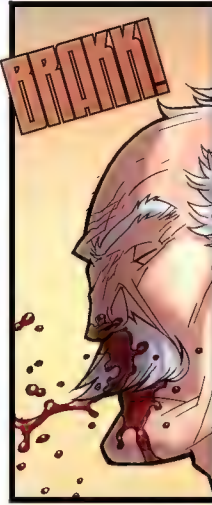
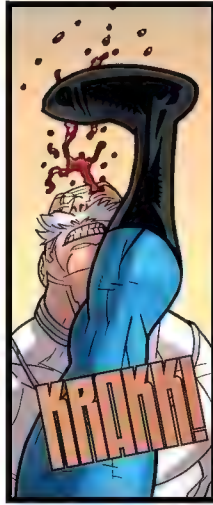
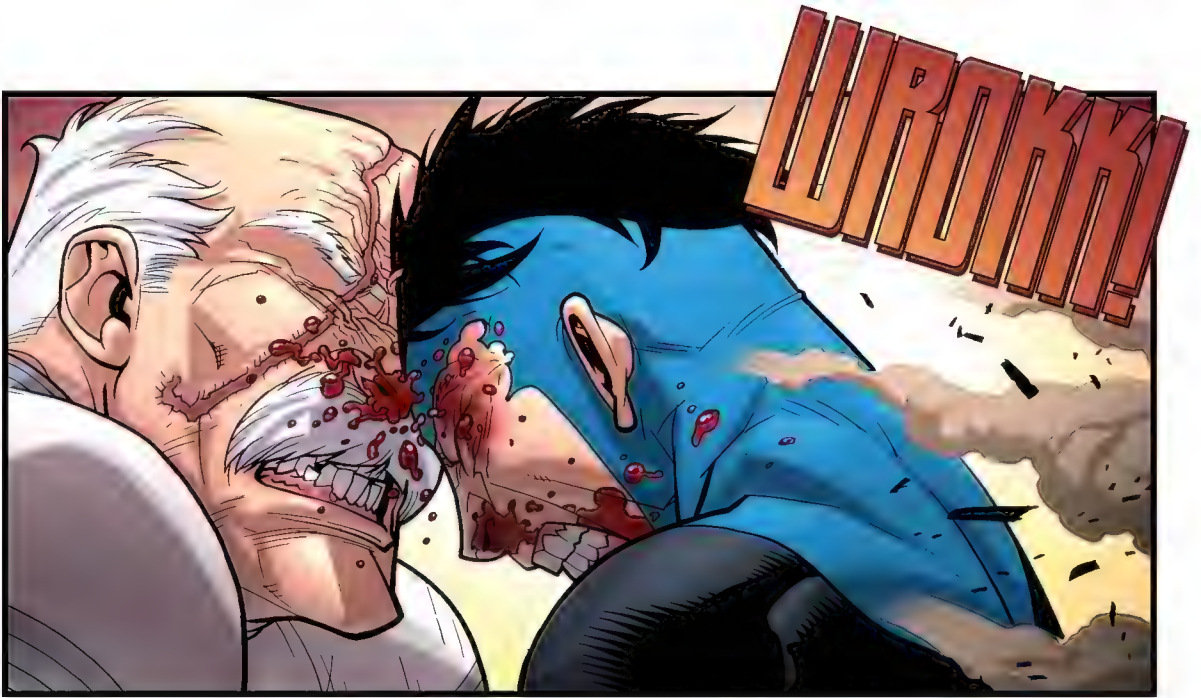




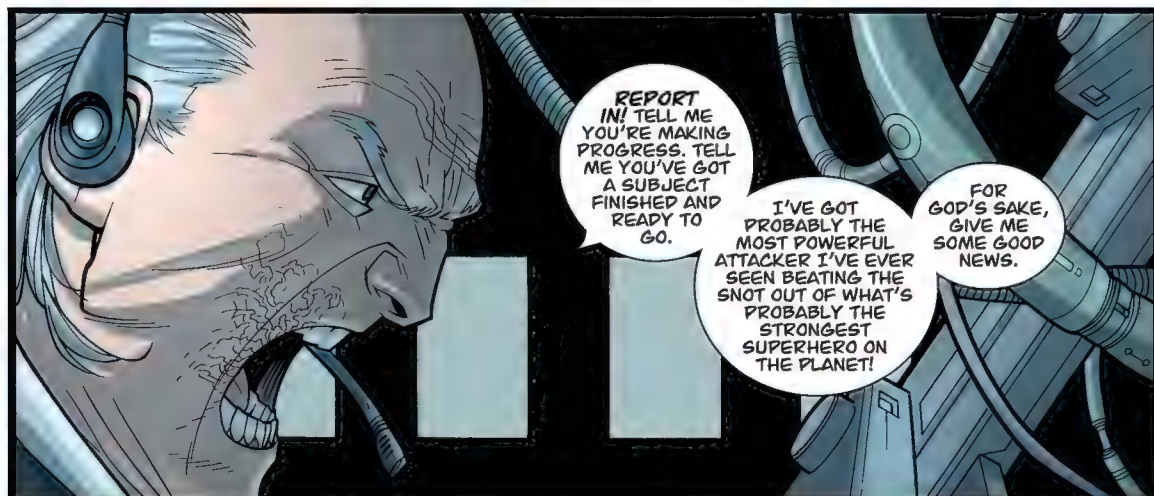
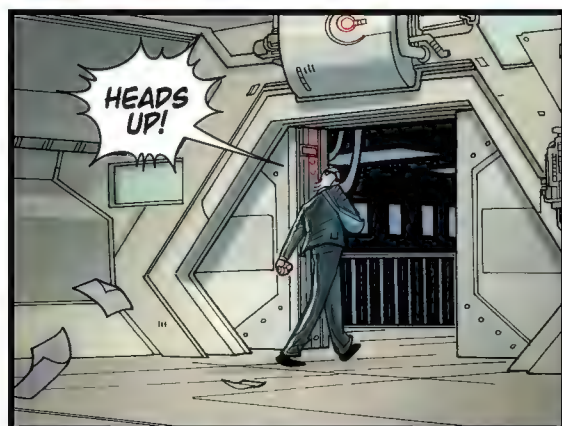
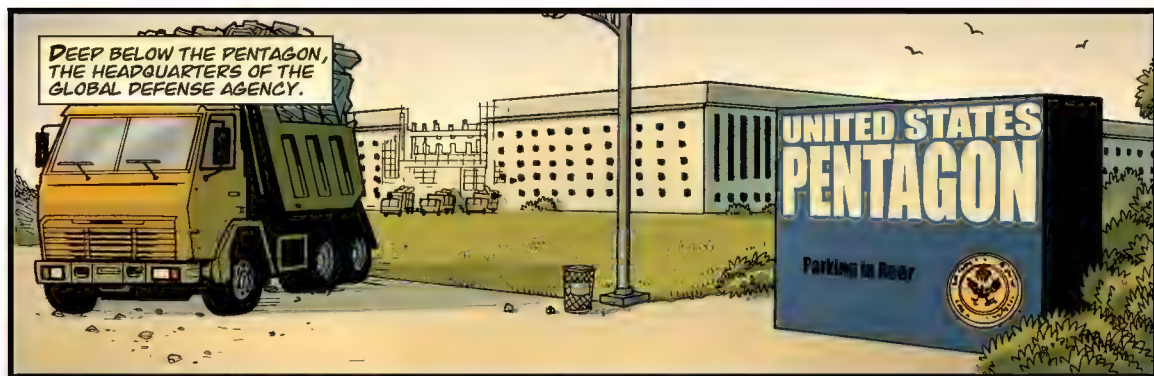


















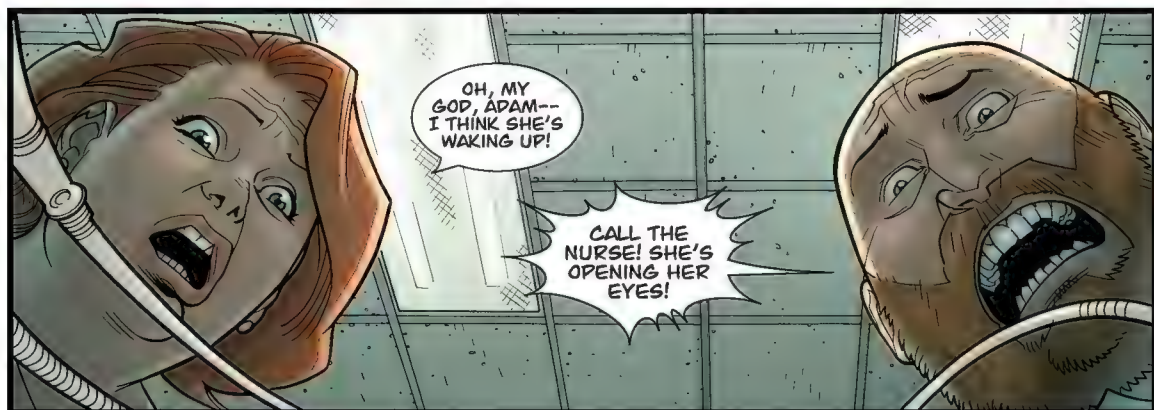
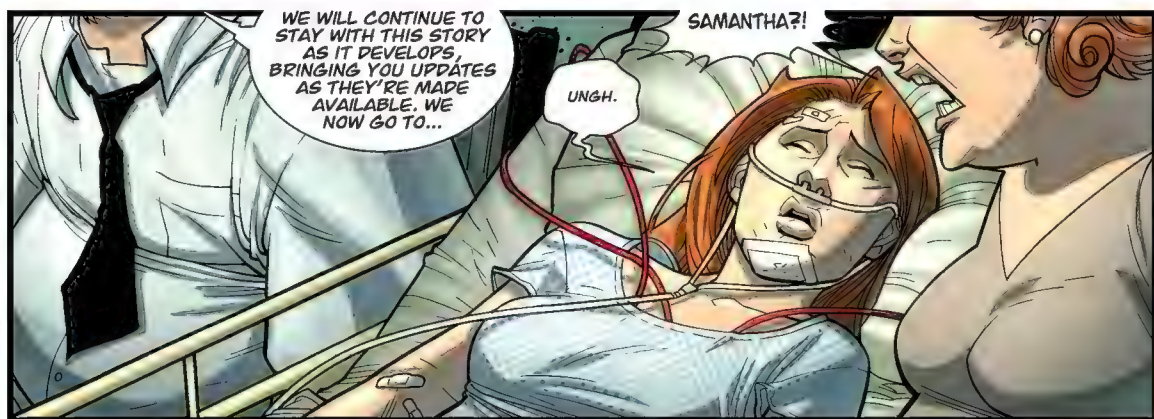
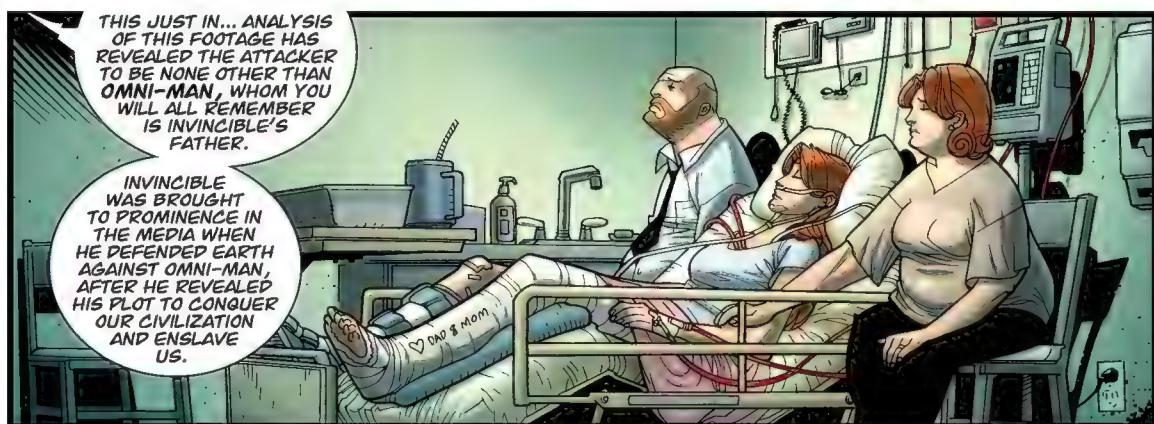
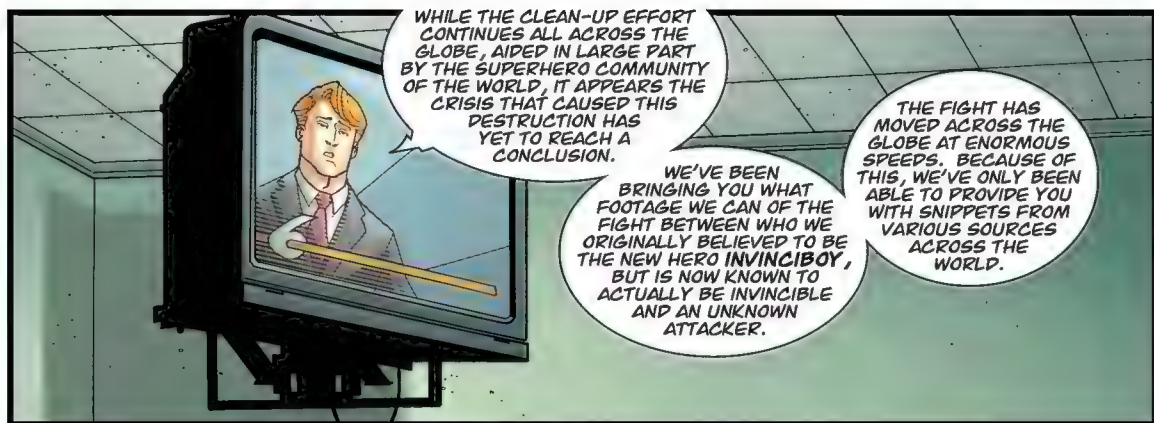




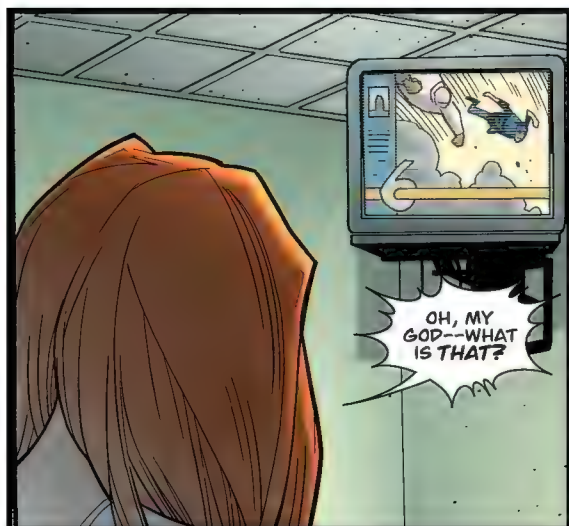
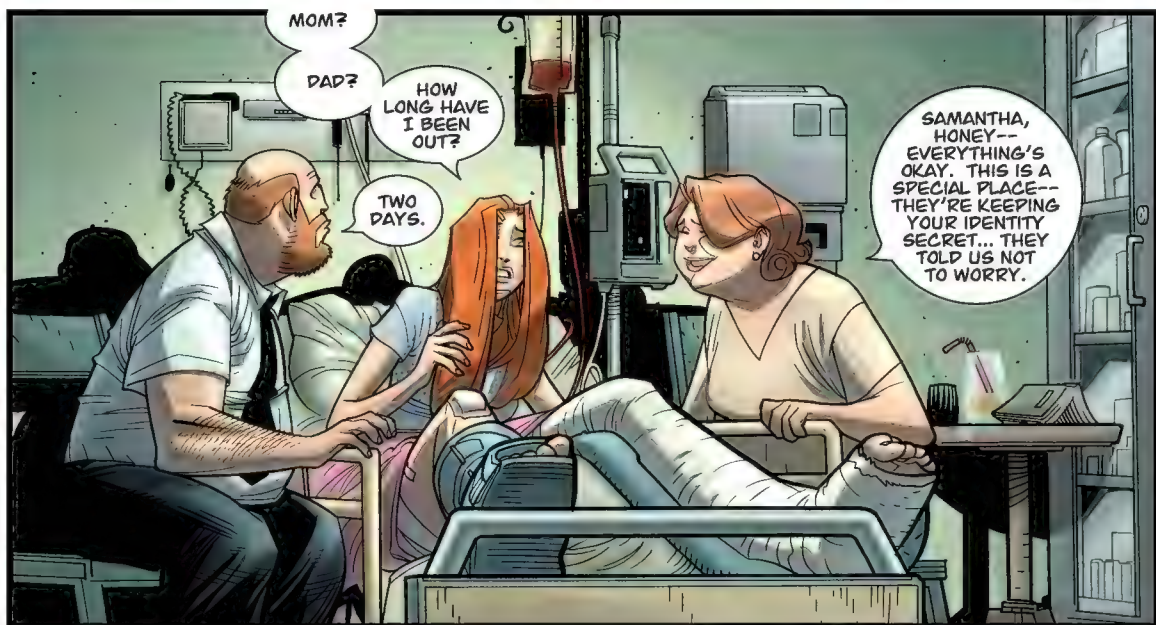
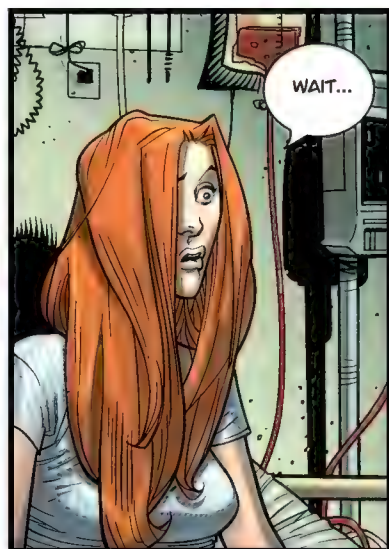
# CHAPTER 63



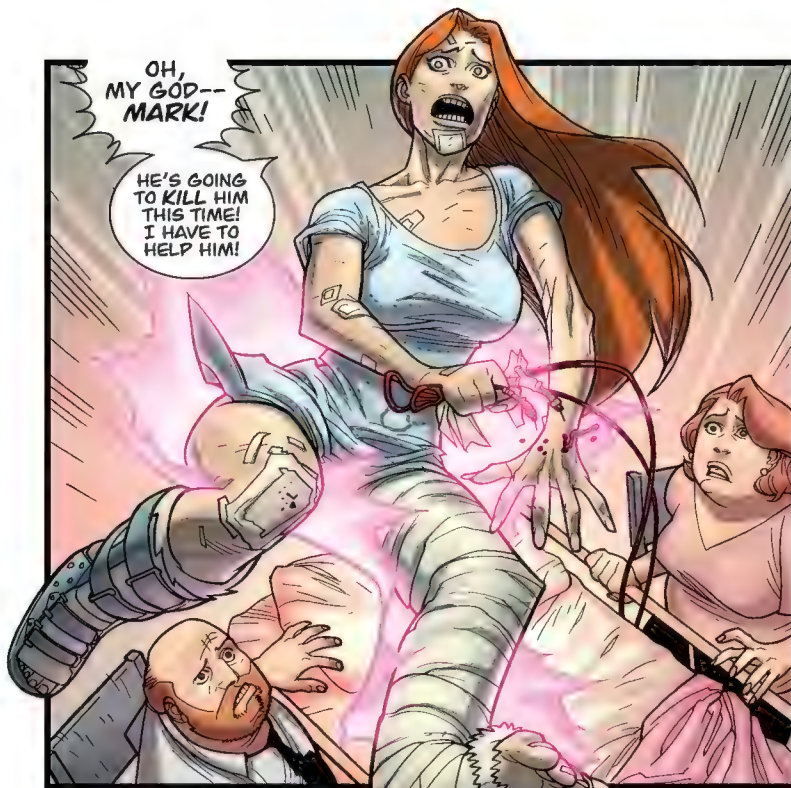






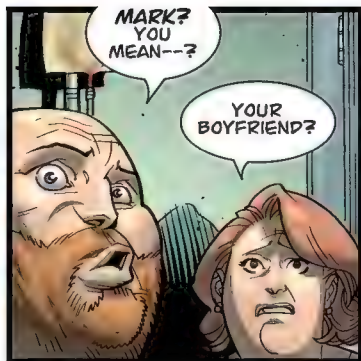






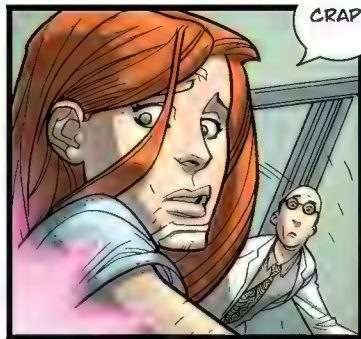
OH,  
MY GOD--  
MARK!

HE'S GOING  
TO KILL HIM  
THIS TIME!  
I HAVE TO  
HELP HIM!



MARK?  
YOU  
MEAN--?

YOUR  
BOYFRIEND?



CRAP.

YOU CAN'T BE DOING THIS--  
YOUR INJURIES, YOU COULD  
MAKE THEM WORSE. THERE  
ARE TESTS--YOU CAN'T  
EVEN WALK!



DO I LOOK LIKE I NEED TO  
WALK?! LISTEN--IF YOU  
GUYS ARE PROTECTING MY  
IDENTITY, I NEED TO SPEAK  
TO THE MAN WHO SET  
THIS UP. GRAY HAIR--  
WEIRD SCAR ON HIS  
MOUTH.

YOU KNOW  
WHO I'M  
TALKING ABOUT.  
GET HIM ON  
THE PHONE--  
NOW!



I'LL--

I'LL  
SEE WHAT  
I CAN  
DO.



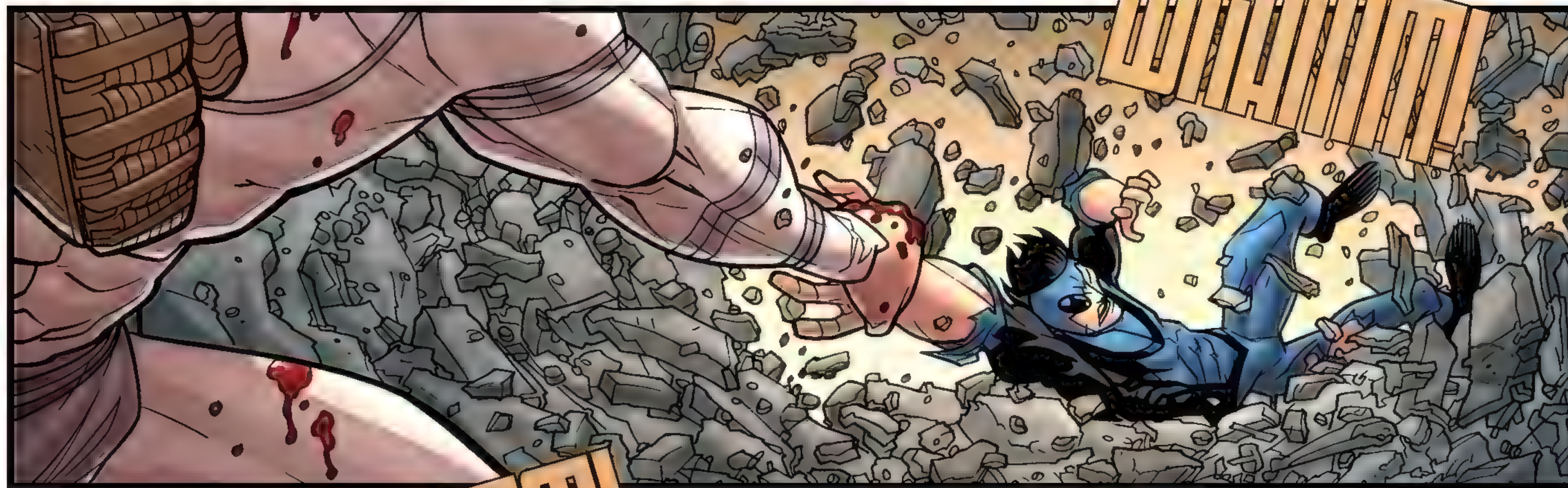
I'M  
COMING,  
MARK.





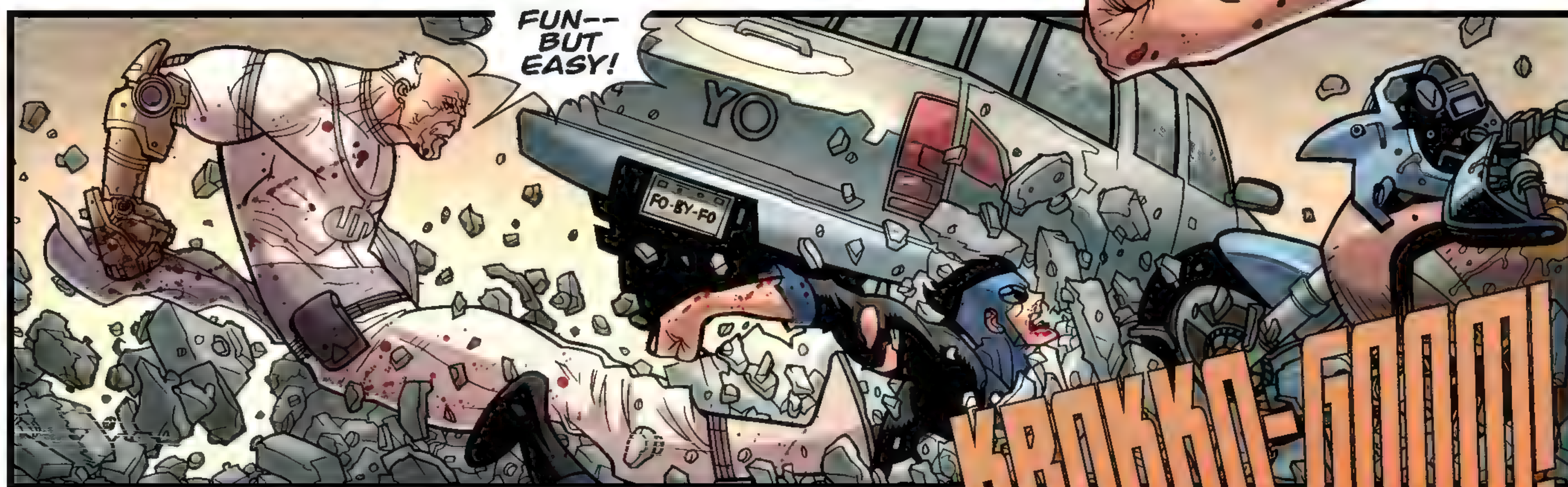
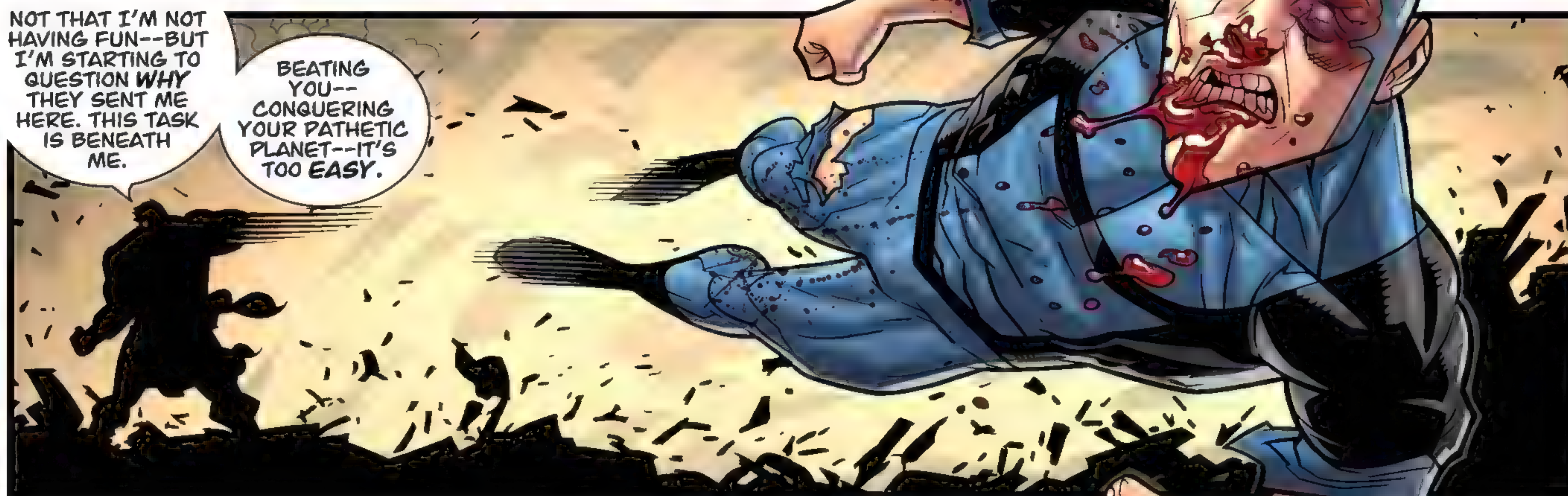
UP UNTIL NOW, I'VE BEEN PLAYING WITH YOU--GETTING TO KNOW THE NEW TOY.

I TIRE OF THAT GAME.



NOT THAT I'M NOT HAVING FUN--BUT I'M STARTING TO QUESTION WHY THEY SENT ME HERE. THIS TASK IS BENEATH ME.

BEATING YOU--CONQUERING YOUR PATHETIC PLANET--IT'S TOO EASY.



FUN--BUT EASY!



I'VE MET YOUR FATHER, YOU KNOW. NEVER SPENT MUCH TIME WITH HIM--BUT I KNEW HIM WHEN HE WAS YOUNGER. HE SHOWED SO MUCH PROMISE.

NOW HE'S DEAD. HEARD HIS EXECUTION WAS FINALLY ORDERED JUST BEFORE I WAS SENT HERE.

SAD REALLY--I'D LOVE TO SEE THE LOOK ON HIS FACE AFTER I TOLD HIM I'VE KILLED YOU.

MY... FATHER...?





EAT ONE,  
YOU OLD  
SACK OF  
TURDS!

WIRROKK!



C'MON--  
HURRY!

WHY DID  
YOU COME BACK?  
HE'LL KILL YOU,  
OLIVER. PLEASE,  
JUST RUN!

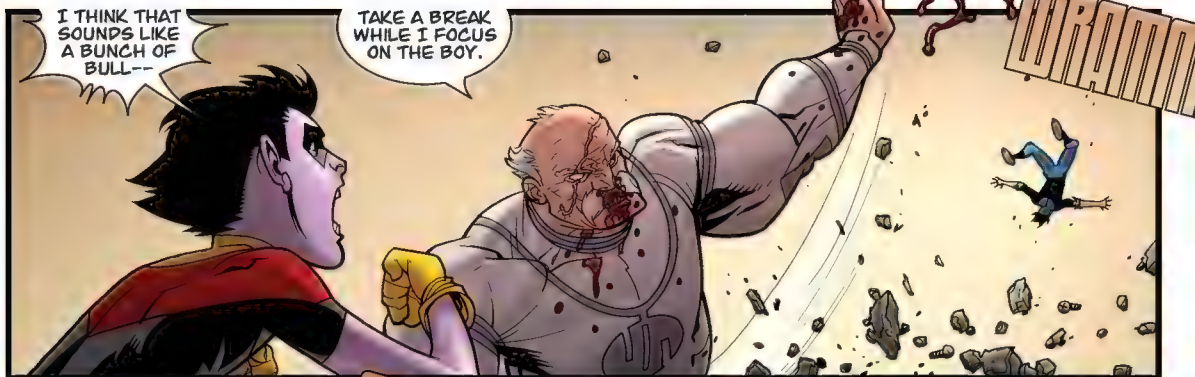
YOU CAN'T  
FIGHT HIM  
ALONE--HE'S  
OLD AS DIRT--  
WE CAN TAKE  
HIM DOWN  
TOGETHER.

TRUST ME,  
YOU CAN'T.  
I'M OLD--  
NOT WEAK.

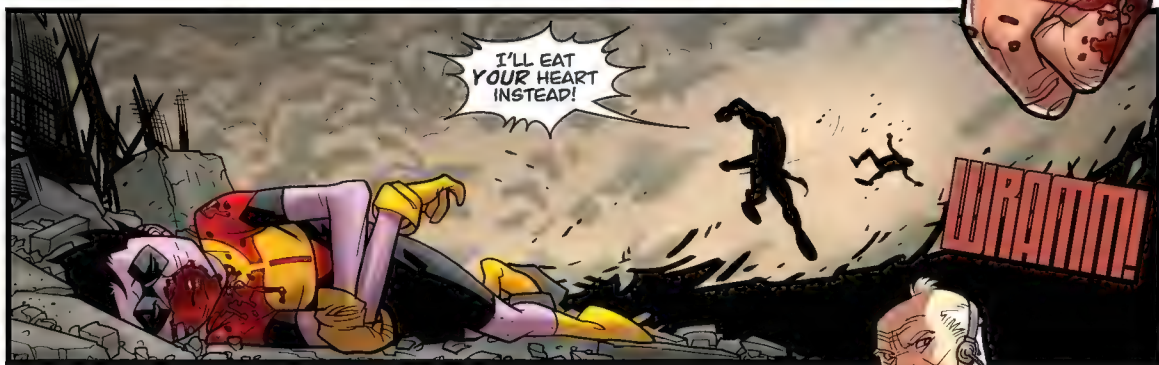
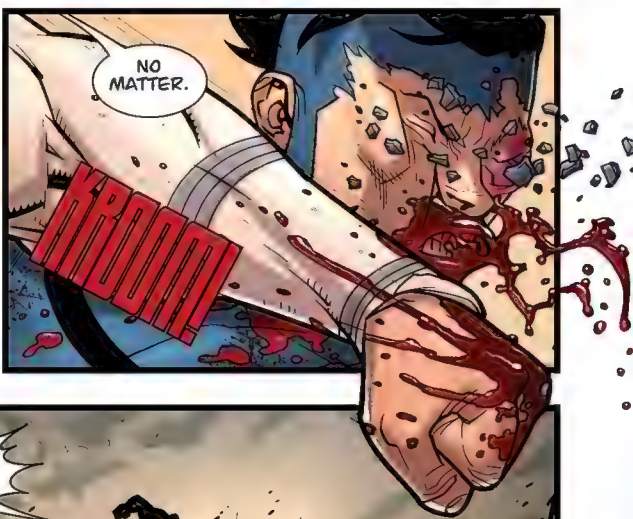
I DO  
THANK YOU FOR  
COMING BACK.  
I WELCOME THE  
SECOND CHANCE.

I'M GOING  
TO SPLIT YOU  
IN HALF AND  
EAT YOUR HEART.  
HOW'S THAT  
SOUND?

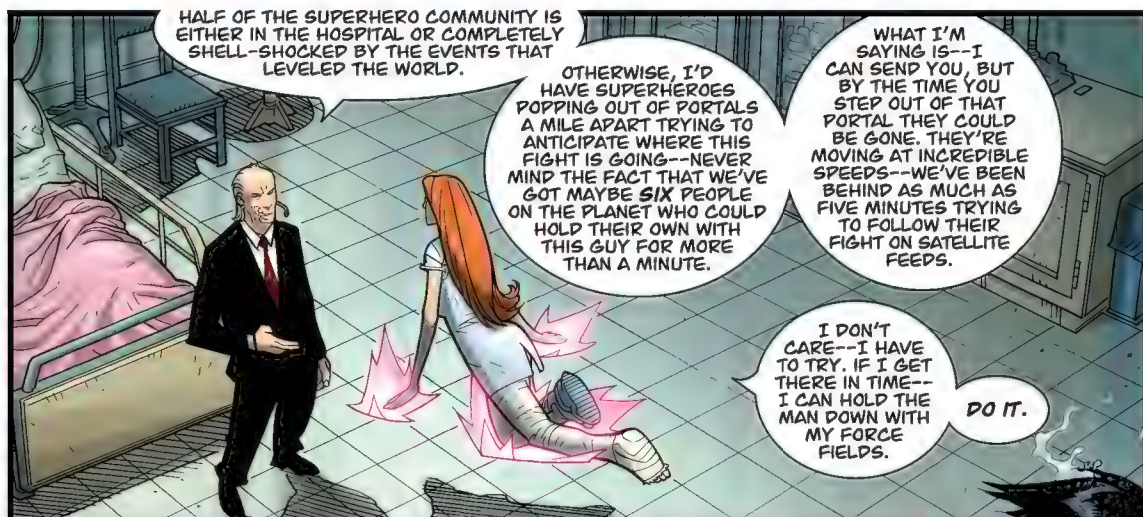
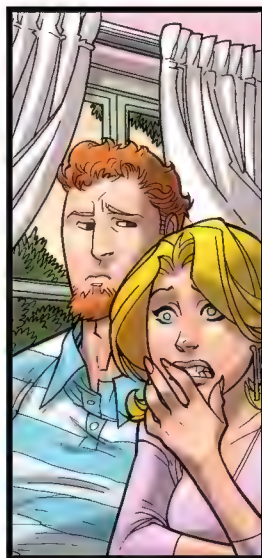








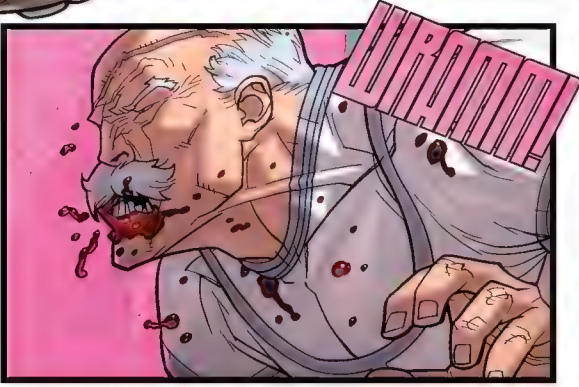














MARK!

GET OUT  
OF HERE!  
GO!

NOW!

WRAAAAAM!

SO CONCERNED  
FOR OTHERS'  
SAFETY...

YOU  
REALLY  
ARE  
PATHETIC.

WURUKK!

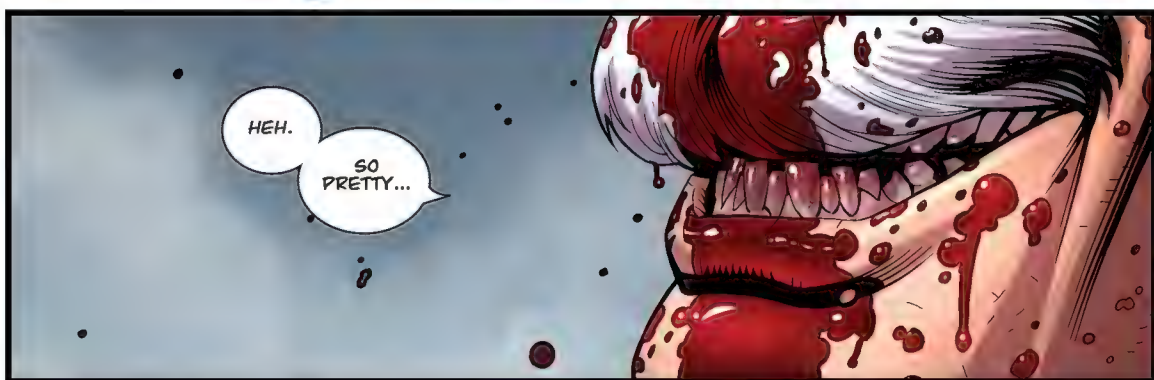
AAAGGH!

NO!

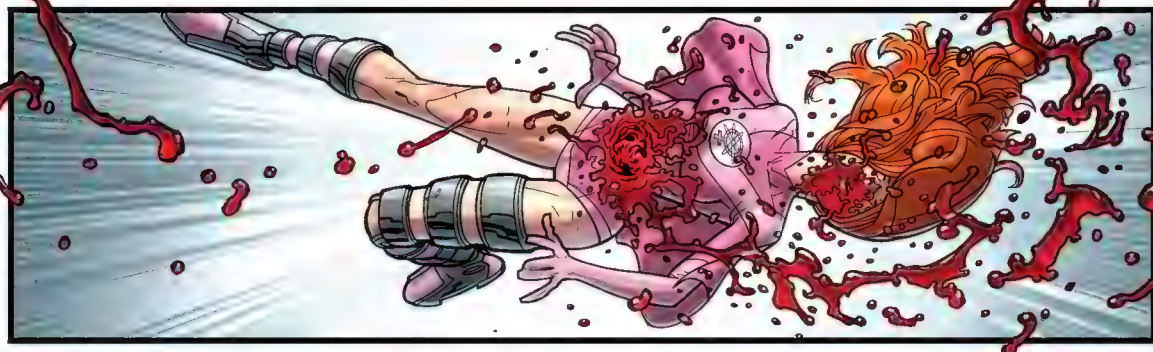
YOU'VE GOT  
PROBLEMS  
OF YOUR OWN,  
KITTEN.

CHOOOM!

















--BREATHING.



SHE MUST HAVE REALLY  
CARED FOR YOU--TO DO  
WHAT SHE DID HERE. SURELY  
SHE WASN'T STUPID ENOUGH  
TO THINK SHE COULD  
ACTUALLY HURT  
ME.

SHE MUST  
HAVE DONE  
ALL THIS  
FOR YOU.

SUCH A  
STRONG BOND,  
WE VILTRUMITES  
HAVE NOTHING LIKE  
THIS. IT BREEDS  
**WEAKNESS**. STILL,  
IT'S ADMIRABLE. I  
AM BEGINNING TO  
UNDERSTAND  
YOUR AFFINITY  
FOR THESE  
CREATURES.



DELICIOUS.



EVE!

EVE--  
DON'T!



NOT  
LONG  
NOW,  
EH?

IF YOU'VE  
GOT ANYTHING  
IMPORTANT TO  
TELL HER--  
BETTER GET  
IT OFF YOUR  
CHEST NOW.





I SHOULD  
DO THIS NOW--  
DON'T KNOW  
WHEN I'LL GET  
THE CHANCE  
AGAIN.

I WANT  
TO THANK  
YOU, MARK  
GRAYSON...  
INVINCIBLE.

REALLY.

FROM  
THE  
BOTTOM  
OF MY  
HEART.

IT'S NOT  
VERY OFTEN  
THAT I GET TO  
CUT LOOSE LIKE  
THIS. I MEAN  
REALLY CUT LOOSE  
LIKE I HAVE HERE.  
USUALLY, THERE  
ARE SO MANY  
MISSION  
PARAMETERS.

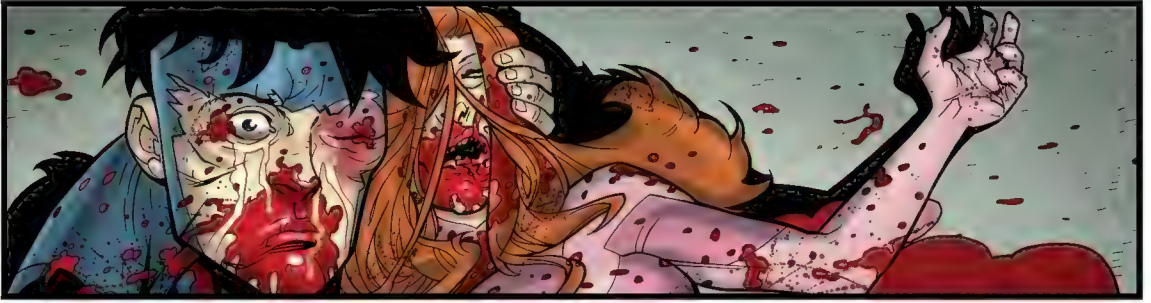
"DON'T  
DESTROY  
THIS."

"KEEP  
THIS  
PERSON  
ALIVE."

BUT NOT HERE--  
NOT WITH **THIS** PLANET.  
FOR WHATEVER REASON,  
I DON'T REALLY CARE  
WHY, TO BE HONEST, I  
WAS TOLD--TAKE CONTROL,  
NO MATTER WHAT IT  
TAKES... TAKE CONTROL  
OF THE PLANET.

SO WHATEVER  
YOU DID TO PISS  
US OFF--THANK  
YOU. THIS HAS  
BEEN FUN.







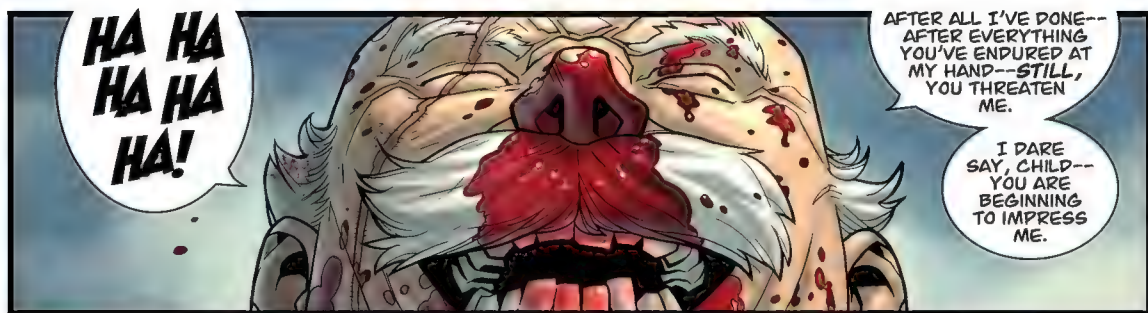




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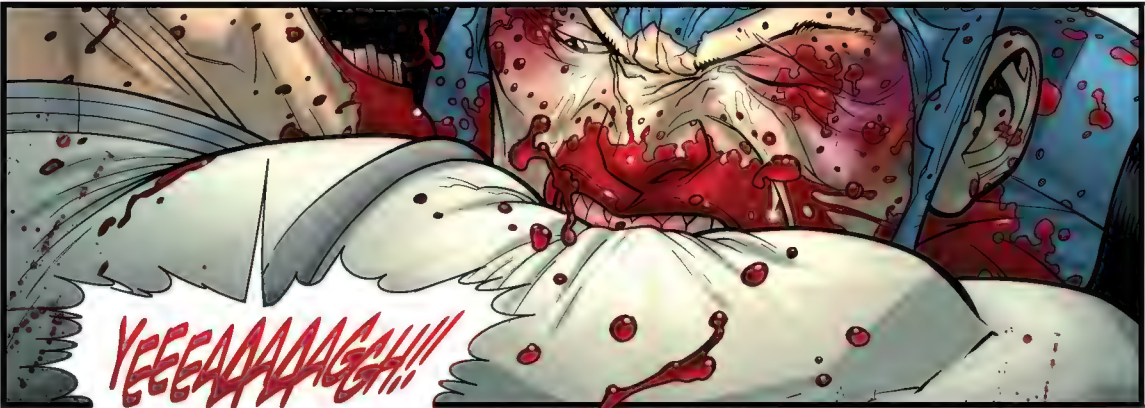
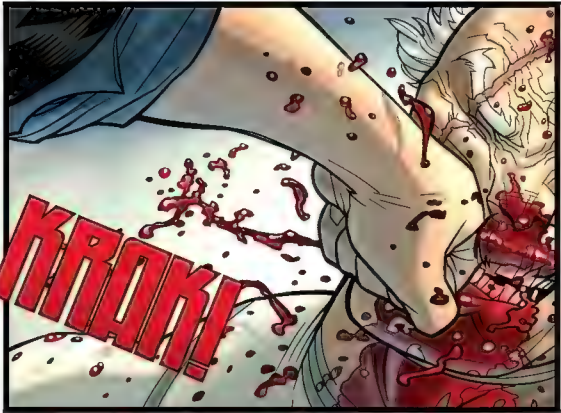
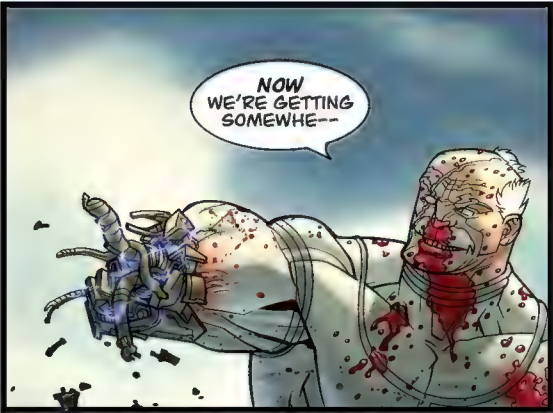




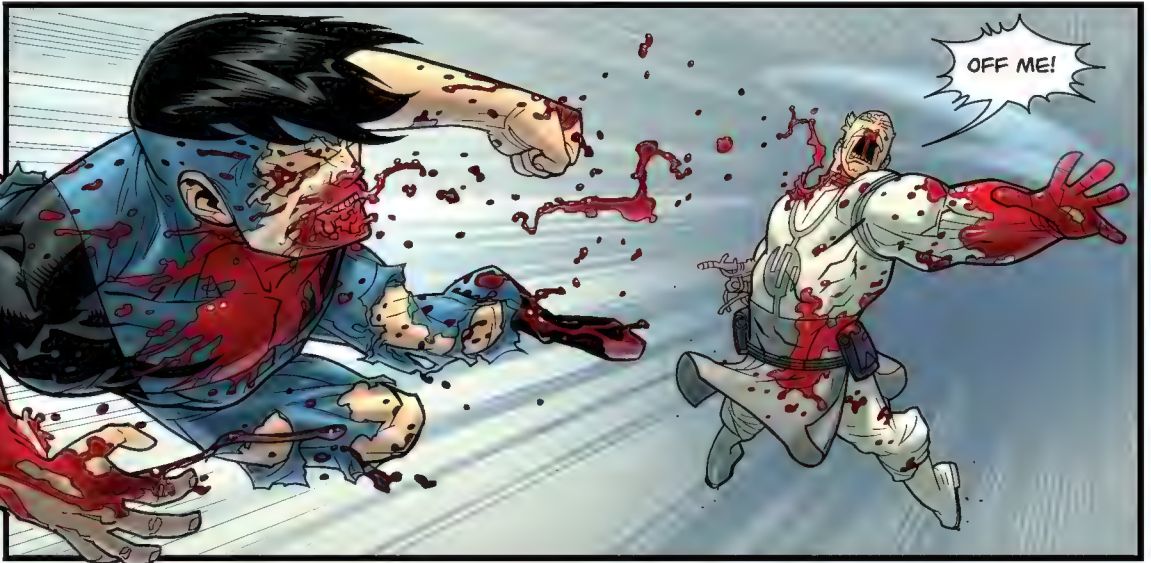




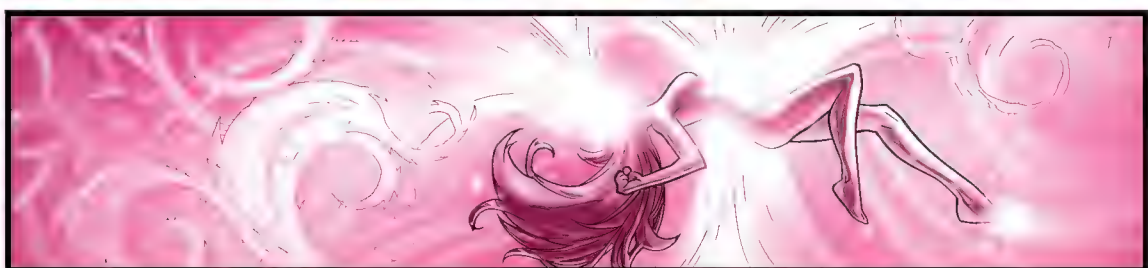
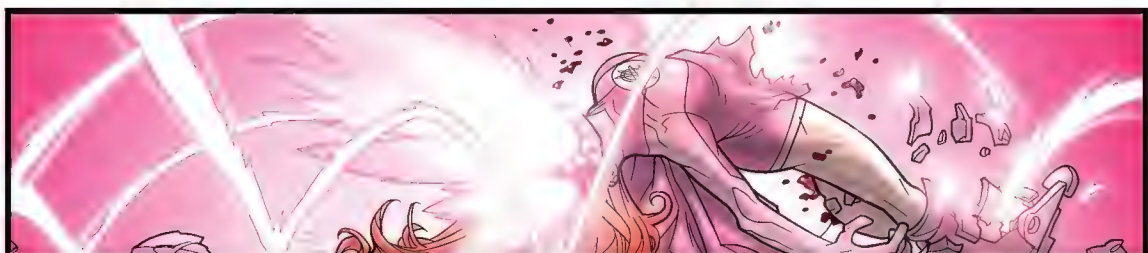
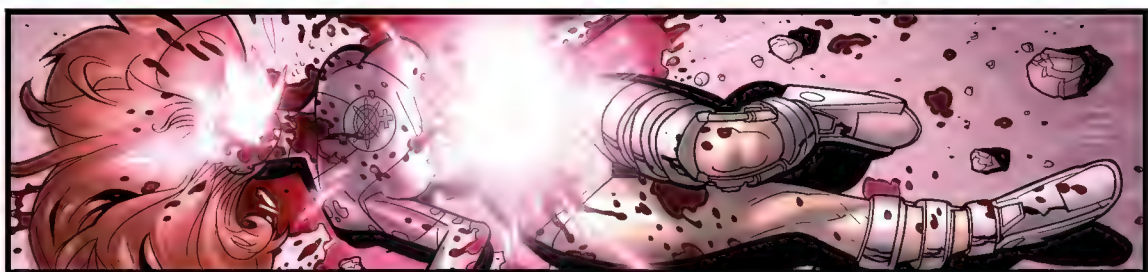
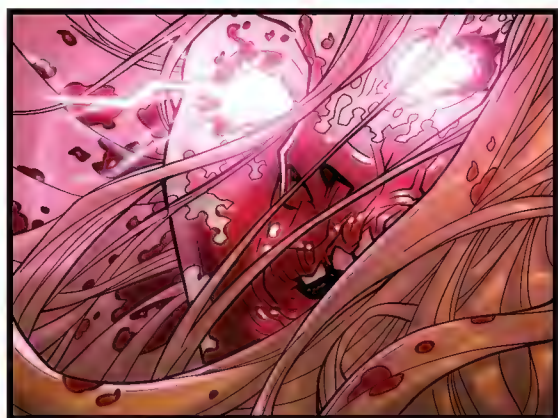




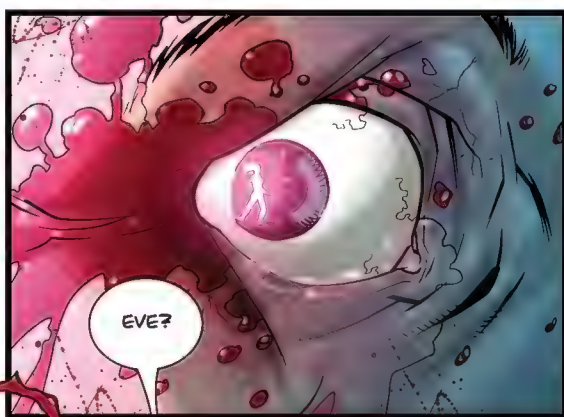
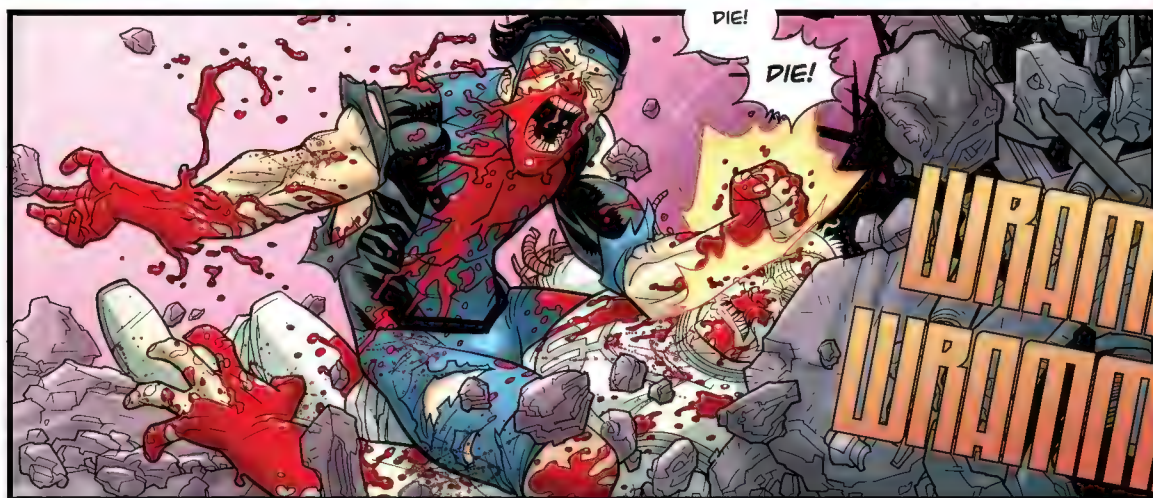








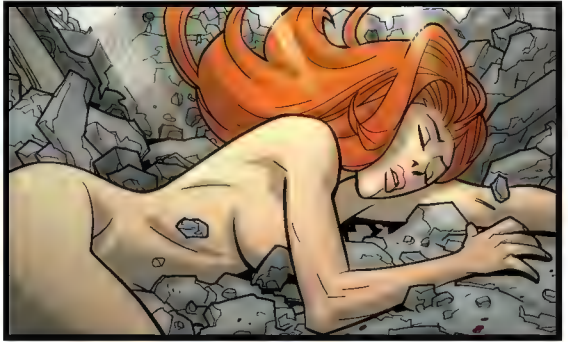
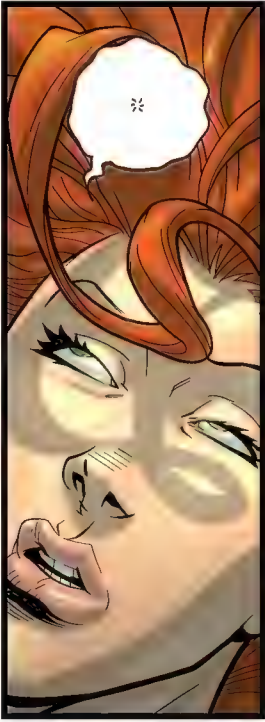
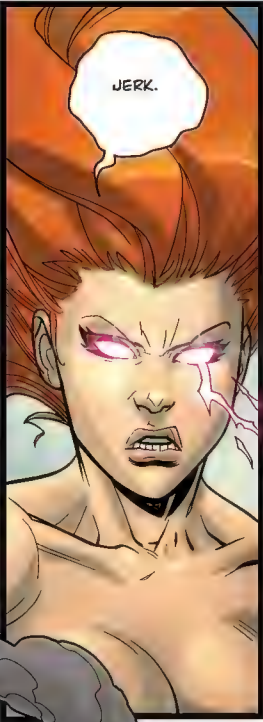
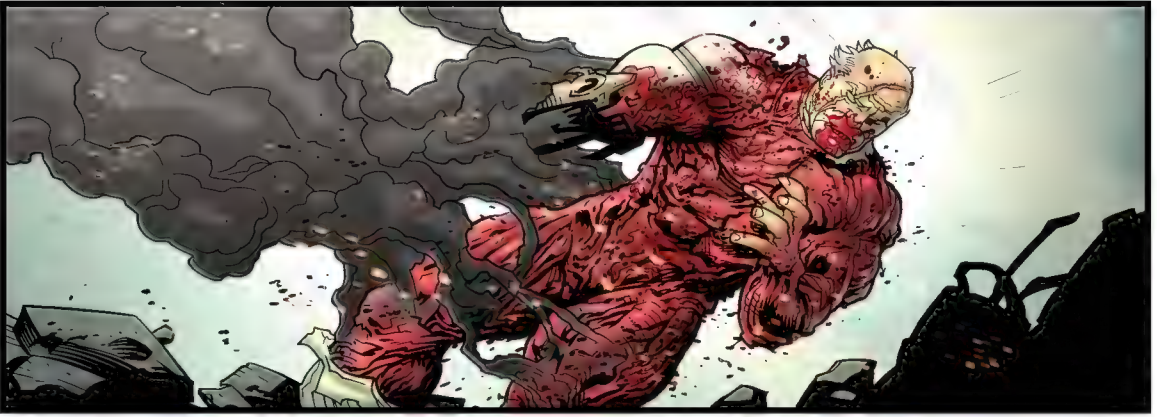




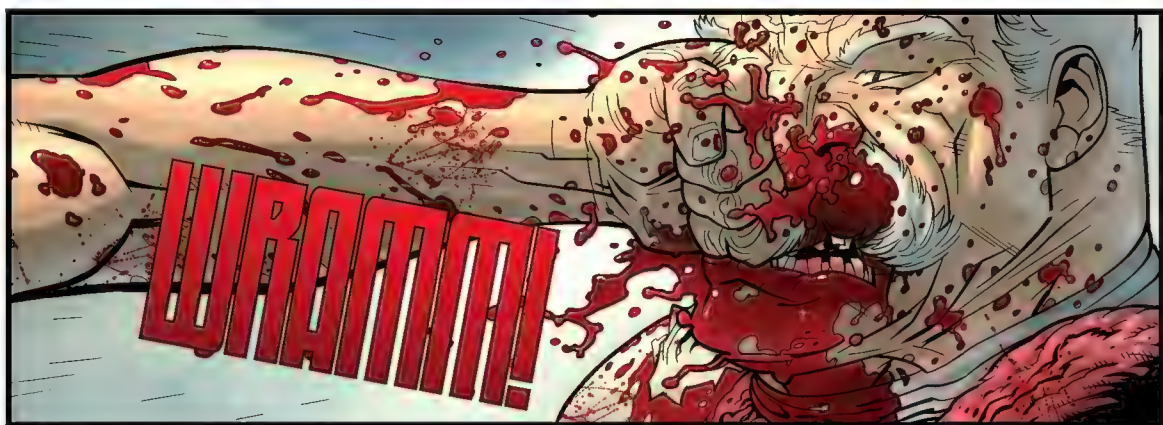




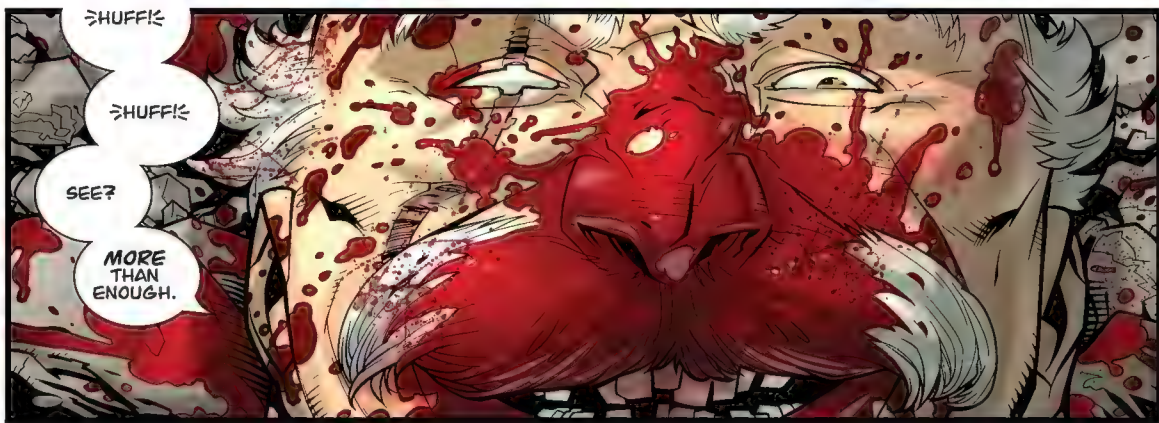




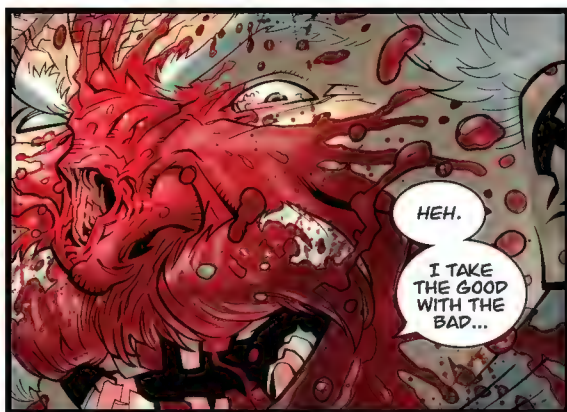
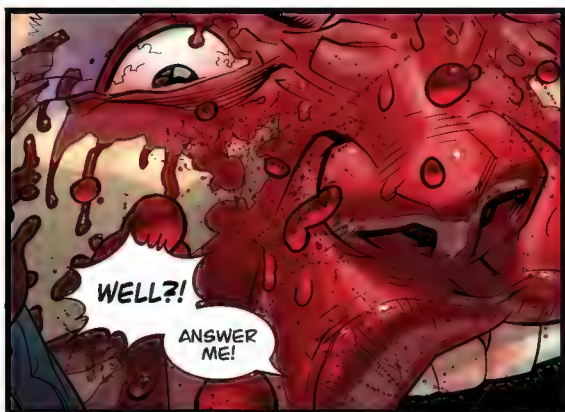








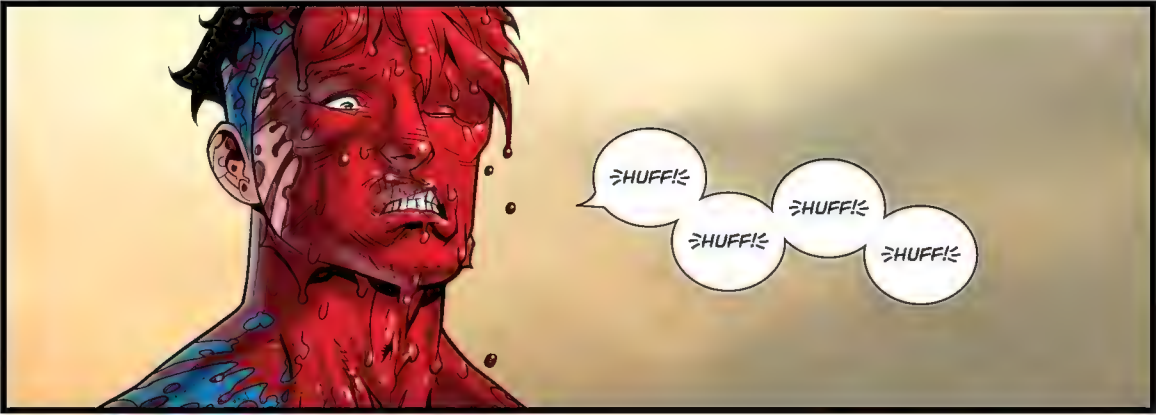




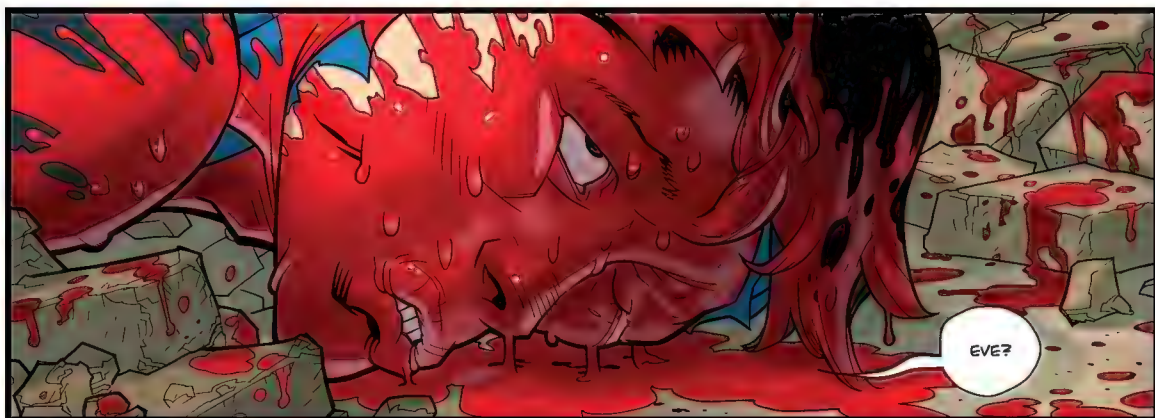












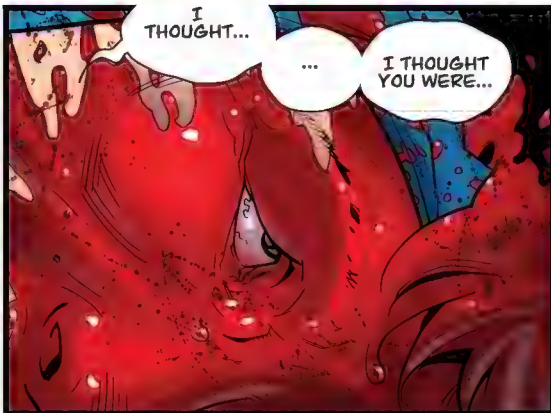
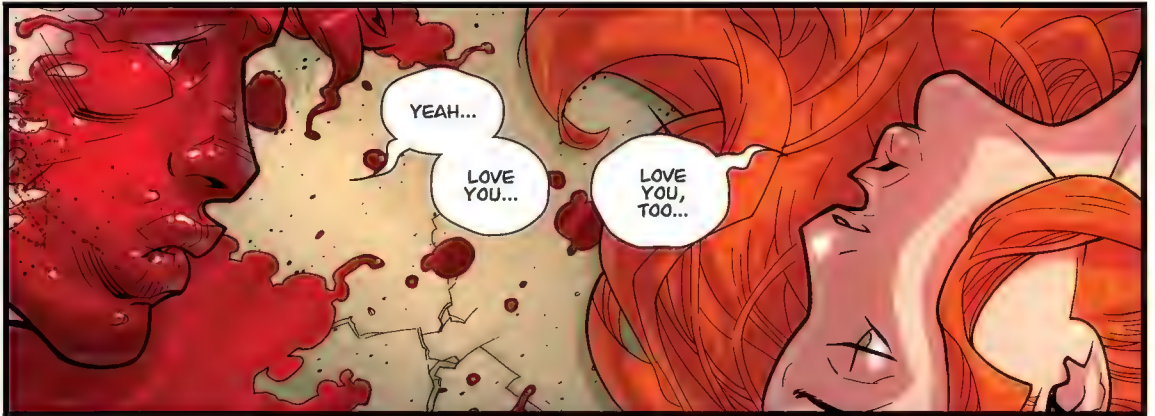
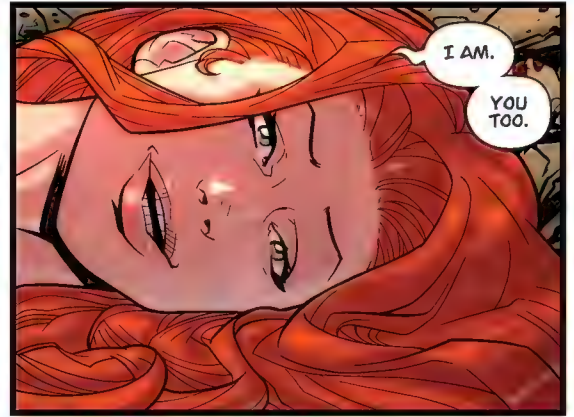
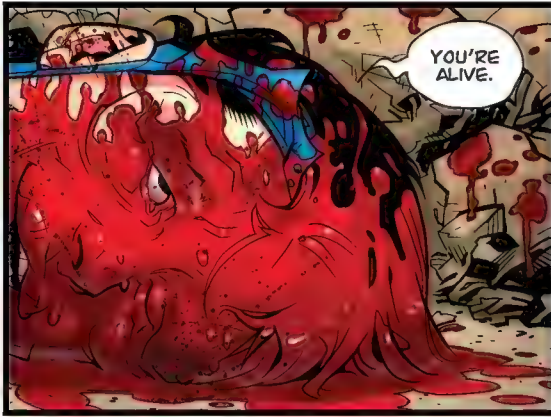
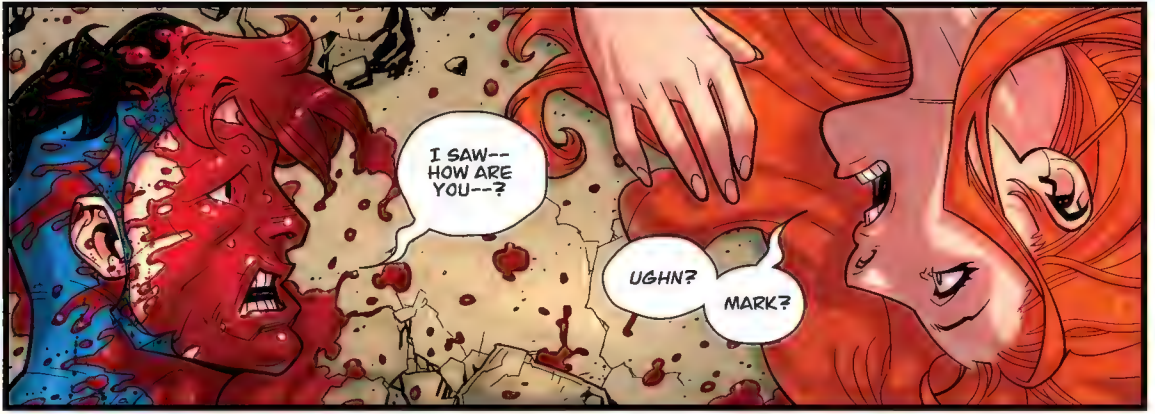




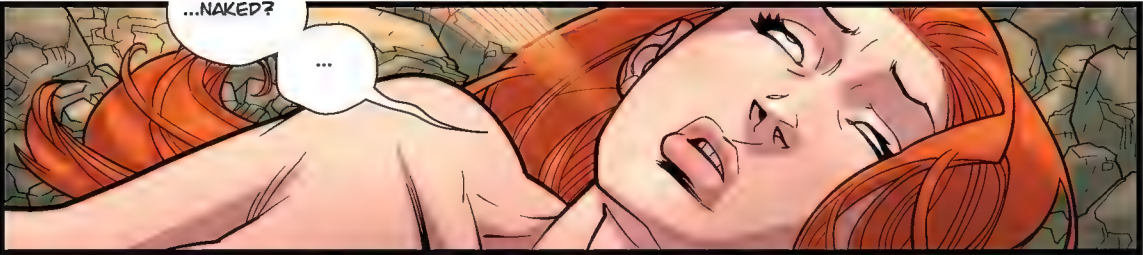
EVE?

HOW?











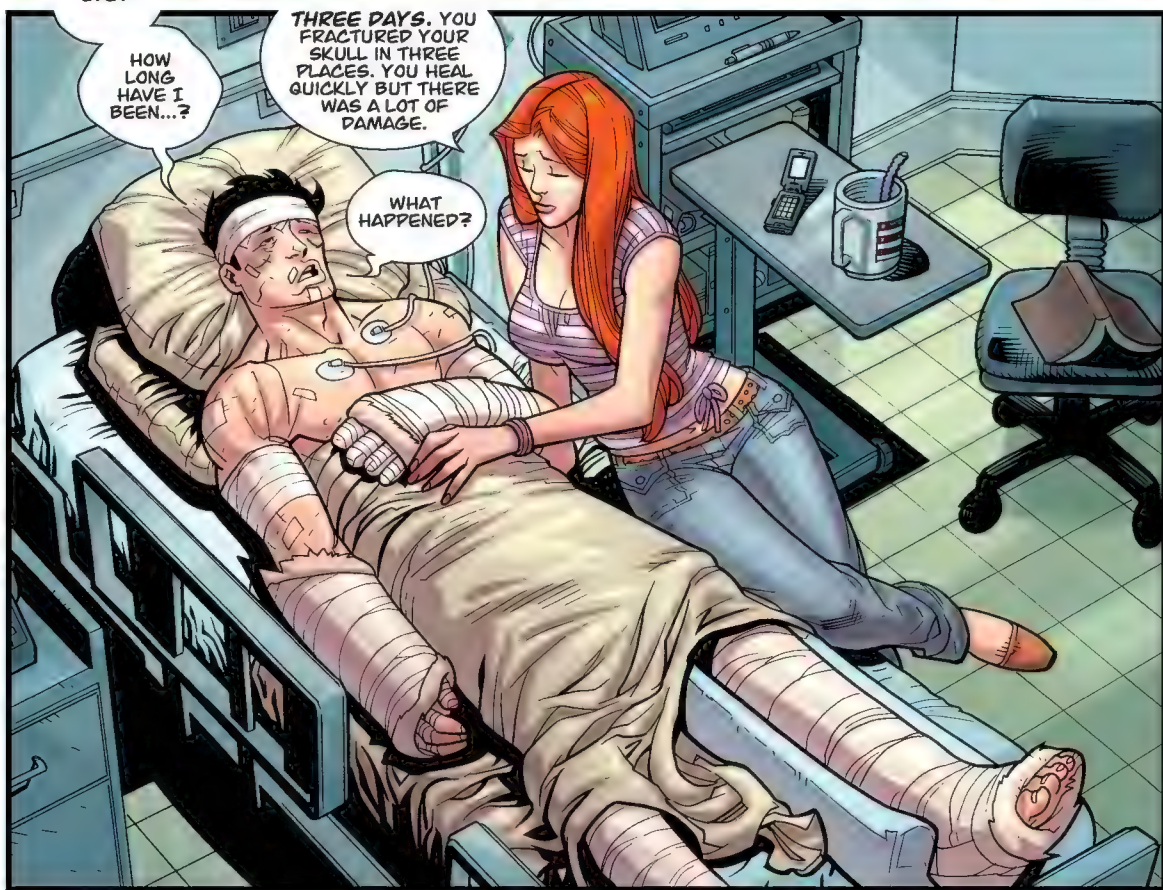
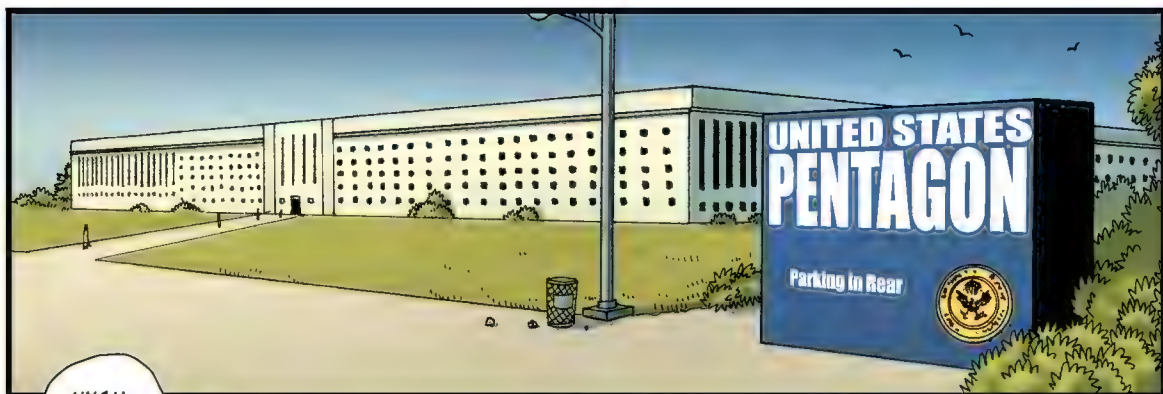




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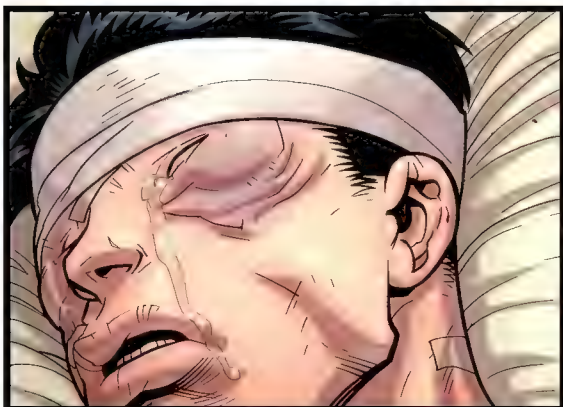








NO... I  
REMEMBER  
EVERYTHING.

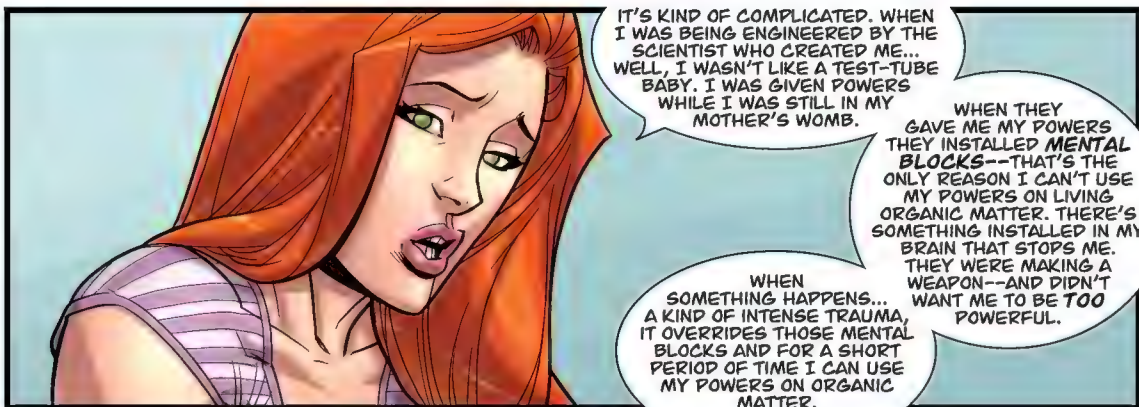


I REMEMBER  
YOU... I  
REMEMBER  
THAT YOU  
DIED.

ARE YOU  
REALLY  
HERE?  
ARE YOU  
ALIVE?

YES. I'M  
ALIVE AND WELL.  
I NEVER ACTUALLY  
DIED... I JUST  
GOT REALLY  
CLOSE.

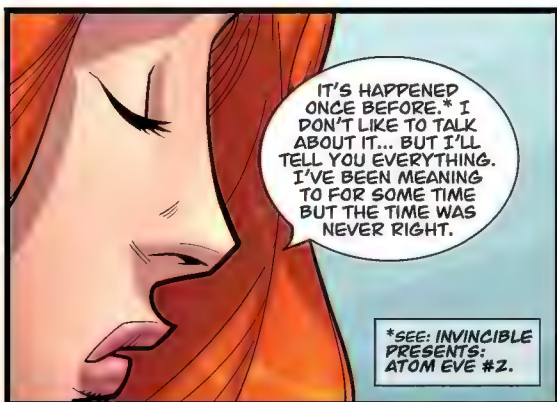
H--  
HOW?



IT'S KIND OF COMPLICATED. WHEN  
I WAS BEING ENGINEERED BY THE  
SCIENTIST WHO CREATED ME...  
WELL, I WASN'T LIKE A TEST-TUBE  
BABY. I WAS GIVEN POWERS  
WHILE I WAS STILL IN MY  
MOTHER'S WOMB.

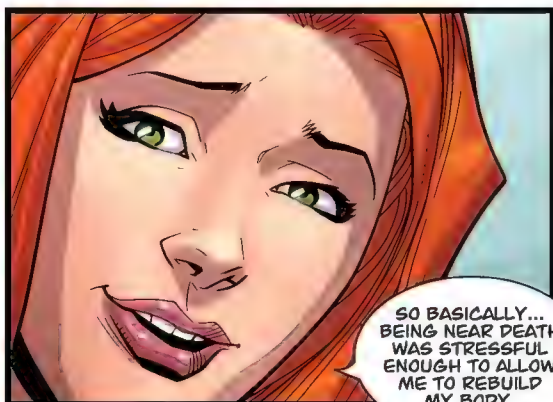
WHEN THEY  
GAVE ME MY POWERS  
THEY INSTALLED **MENTAL  
BLOCKS**--THAT'S THE  
ONLY REASON I CAN'T USE  
MY POWERS ON LIVING  
ORGANIC MATTER. THERE'S  
SOMETHING INSTALLED IN MY  
BRAIN THAT STOPS ME.  
THEY WERE MAKING A  
WEAPON--AND DIDN'T  
WANT ME TO BE TOO  
POWERFUL.

WHEN  
SOMETHING HAPPENS...  
A KIND OF INTENSE TRAUMA,  
IT OVERRIDES THOSE MENTAL  
BLOCKS AND FOR A SHORT  
PERIOD OF TIME I CAN USE  
MY POWERS ON ORGANIC  
MATTER.



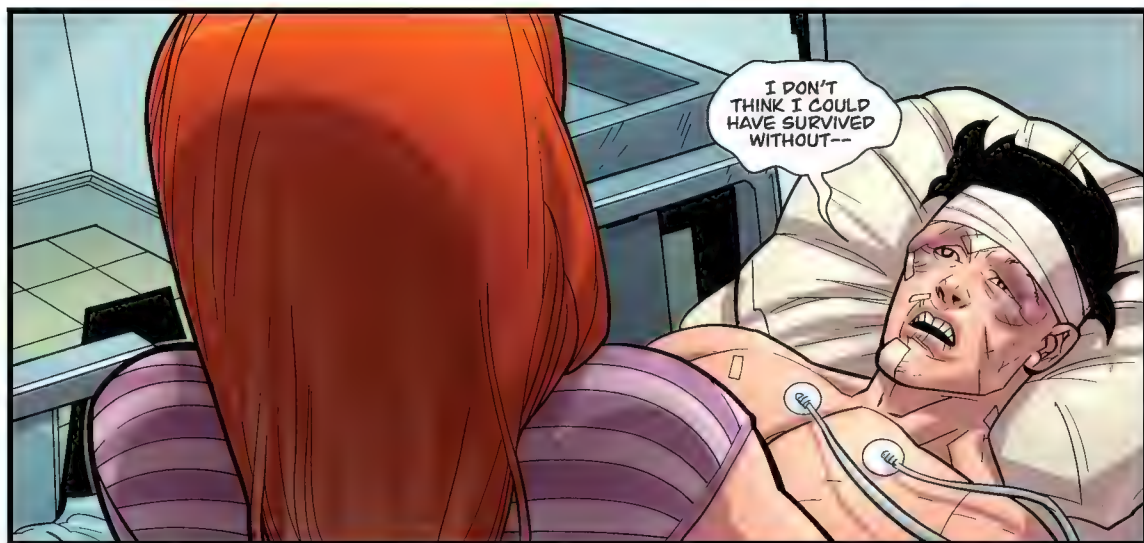
IT'S HAPPENED  
ONCE BEFORE.\* I  
DON'T LIKE TO TALK  
ABOUT IT... BUT I'LL  
TELL YOU EVERYTHING.  
I'VE BEEN MEANING  
TO FOR SOME TIME  
BUT THE TIME WAS  
NEVER RIGHT.

\*SEE: INVINCIBLE  
PRESENTS:  
ATOM EVE #2.

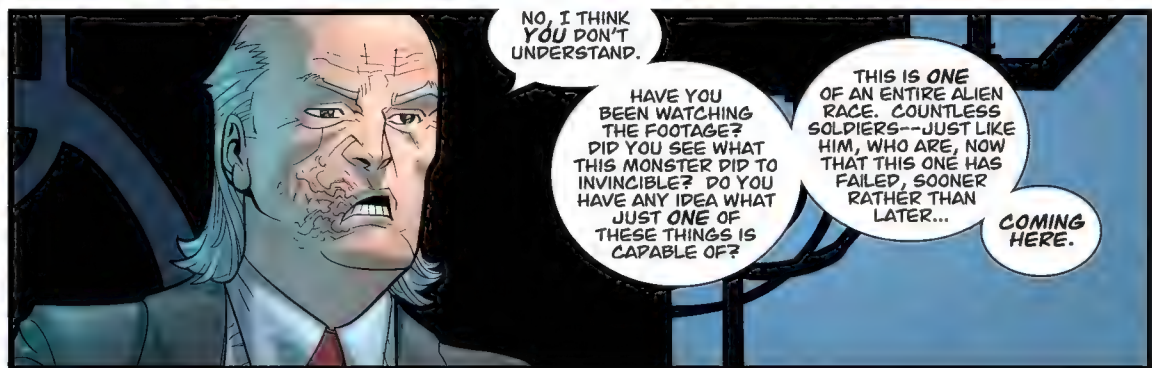


SO BASICALLY...  
BEING NEAR DEATH  
WAS STRESSFUL  
ENOUGH TO ALLOW  
ME TO REBUILD  
MY BODY.

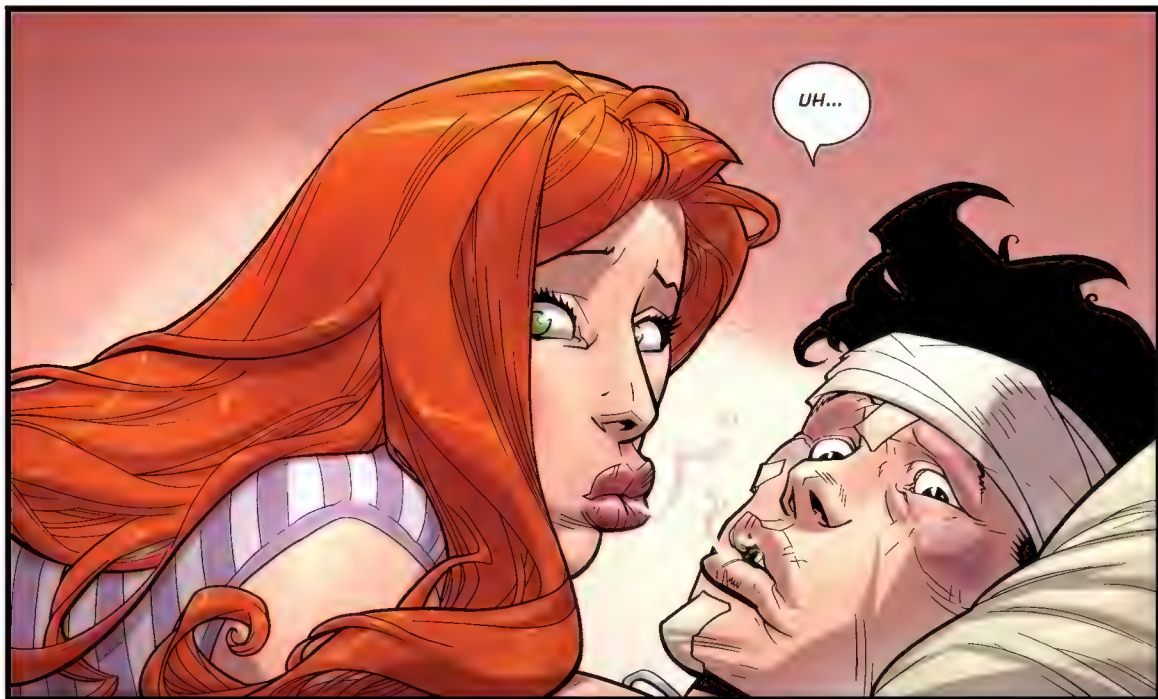
















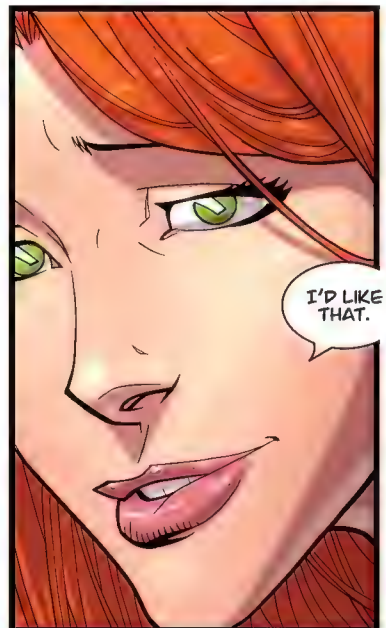
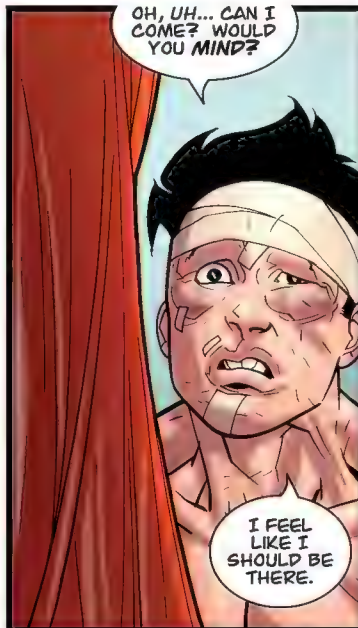
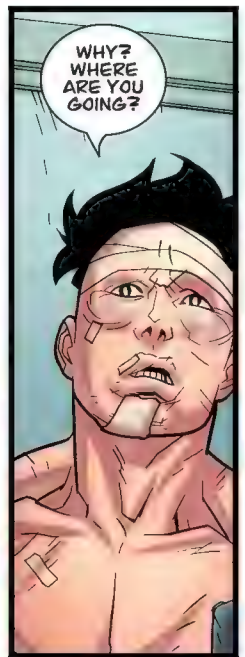
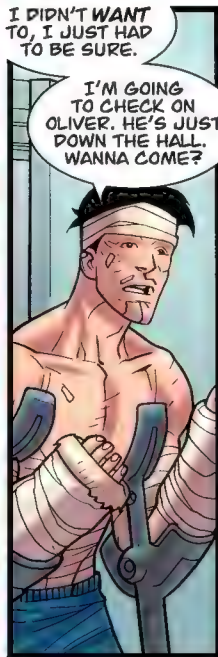
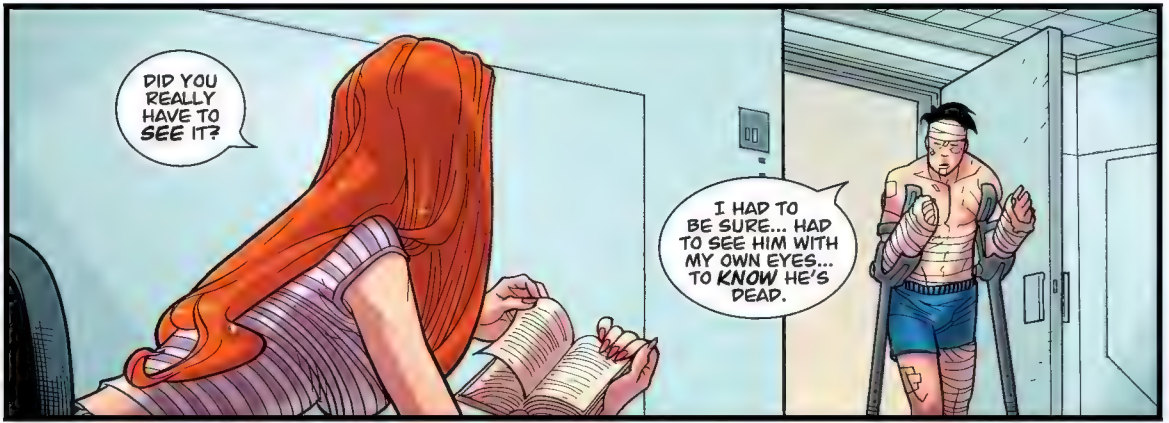
















...WE DIDN'T GET ALONG AT FIRST. HE WAS ALWAYS PUSHING MY BUTTONS.

HUH.

BUTTONS... ROBOT... HE WOULD HAVE THOUGHT THAT WAS FUNNY. I'D BE LYING IF I SAID I DIDN'T LIKE HIM AT FIRST, THE TRUTH IS, I IDOLIZED HIM. HE WAS ALWAYS SO CONFIDENT, SO SURE OF HIMSELF AT ALL TIMES.

AND NOW HE'S GONE. I WILL MISS HIM MORE THAN I CAN EVER SAY.

HE WAS EVERYTHING I WANTED TO BE...

I'VE LIVED MOST OF MY LIFE THROUGH DRONES LIKE THE ONE YOU SEE BEFORE YOU NOW. I HAVE ALWAYS SIMPLY BEEN "ROBOT." I HAVE NEVER BEEN COMFORTABLE USING MY GIVEN NAME-- IT REMINDS ME OF THE DISFIGURED BODY I INHABITED MOST OF MY LIFE... BEFORE I TRANSFERRED MYSELF INTO A CLONED BODY OF MY OLDEST FRIEND.

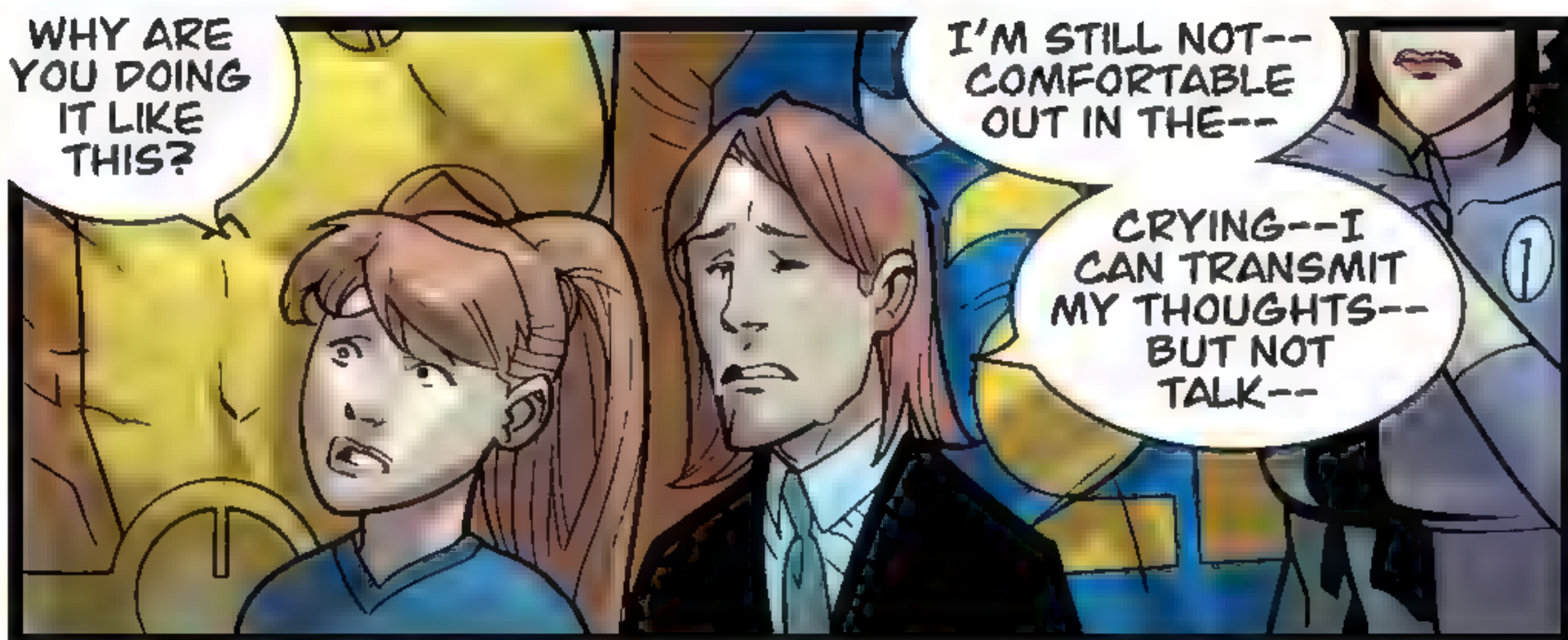
IN HONOR OF THIS FALLEN HERO, I'VE DECIDED THAT I WILL TAKE HIS NAME. I AM CHANGING MY NAME TO "REX." THAT MUCH OF HIM, AT LEAST, WILL LIVE ON.

HE WILL BE MISSED.

I ONLY HOPE THAT I CAN LIVE UP TO HIS SACRIFICE. HE DIED AS HE LIVED--SAVING LIVES.



NOW I BELIEVE ATOM EVE WANTED TO SAY A FEW WORDS.



WHY ARE YOU DOING IT LIKE THIS?

I'M STILL NOT-- COMFORTABLE OUT IN THE--

CRYING--I CAN TRANSMIT MY THOUGHTS-- BUT NOT TALK--



OH, HONEY, I DIDN'T-- YOU'RE APORABLE.

I LOVE YOU... "REX."



REX SPLODE WAS...

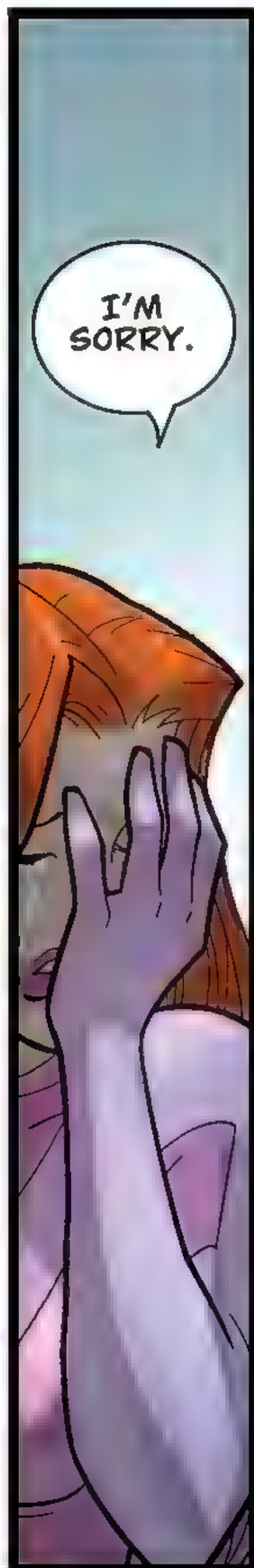
HE WAS MY FIRST... EVERYTHING...



HE WAS...



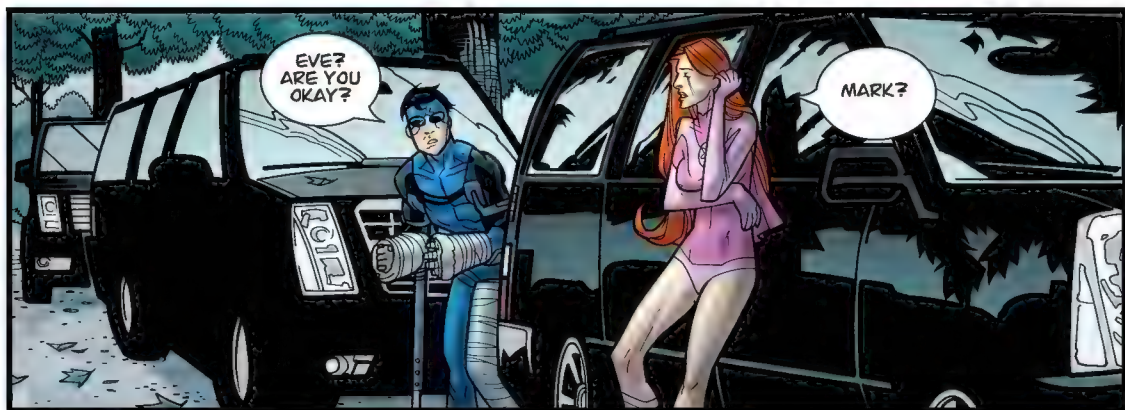
...



I'M SORRY.

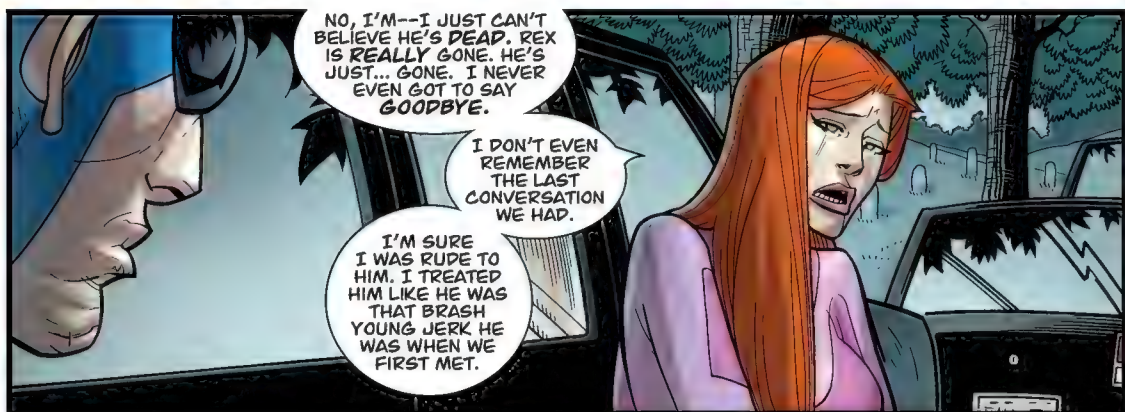






EVE?  
ARE YOU  
OKAY?

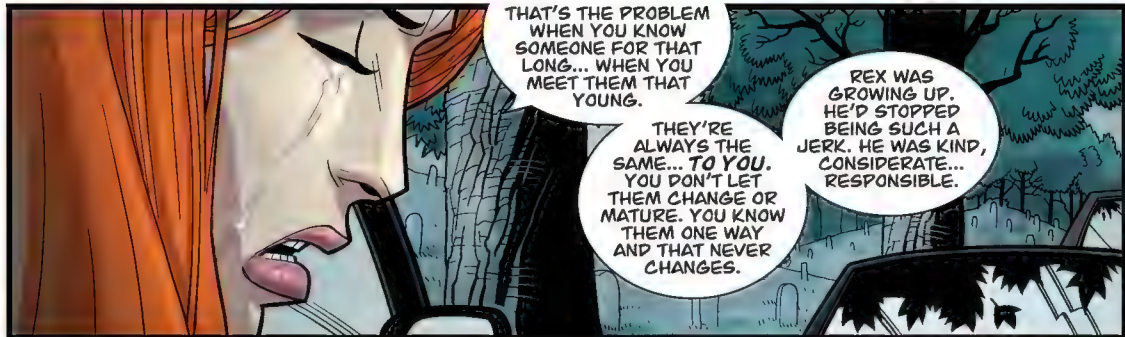
MARK?



NO, I'M--I JUST CAN'T  
BELIEVE HE'S DEAD. REX  
IS REALLY GONE. HE'S  
JUST... GONE. I NEVER  
EVEN GOT TO SAY  
GOODBYE.

I DON'T EVEN  
REMEMBER  
THE LAST  
CONVERSATION  
WE HAD.

I'M SURE  
I WAS RUDE TO  
HIM. I TREATED  
HIM LIKE HE WAS  
THAT BRASH  
YOUNG JERK HE  
WAS WHEN WE  
FIRST MET.



THAT'S THE PROBLEM  
WHEN YOU KNOW  
SOMEONE FOR THAT  
LONG... WHEN YOU  
MEET THEM THAT  
YOUNG.

THEY'RE  
ALWAYS THE  
SAME... TO YOU.  
YOU DON'T LET  
THEM CHANGE OR  
MATURE. YOU KNOW  
THEM ONE WAY  
AND THAT NEVER  
CHANGES.

REX WAS  
GROWING UP.  
HE'D STOPPED  
BEING SUCH A  
JERK. HE WAS KIND,  
CONSIDERATE...  
RESPONSIBLE.



HE WAS AN  
ADULT... AND  
I NEVER GAVE  
HIM A  
CHANCE.

I NEVER  
ALLOWED MYSELF  
TO SEE HOW MUCH  
HE'D CHANGED.  
HE MEANT SO  
MUCH TO ME  
AND HE--



WHAT?  
WHAT IS  
IT?

I'M SORRY.  
I DON'T MEAN  
TO TALK ABOUT  
HIM LIKE THIS  
IN FRONT OF  
YOU.



I FEEL  
GUILTY BEING  
SAD IN FRONT  
OF YOU...

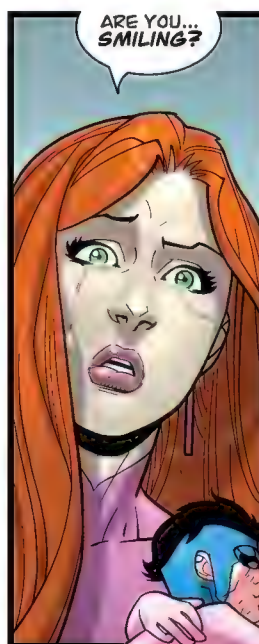
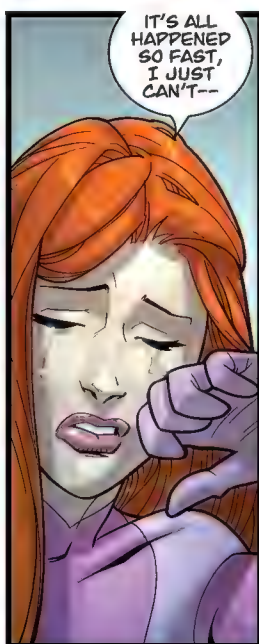


WHY?

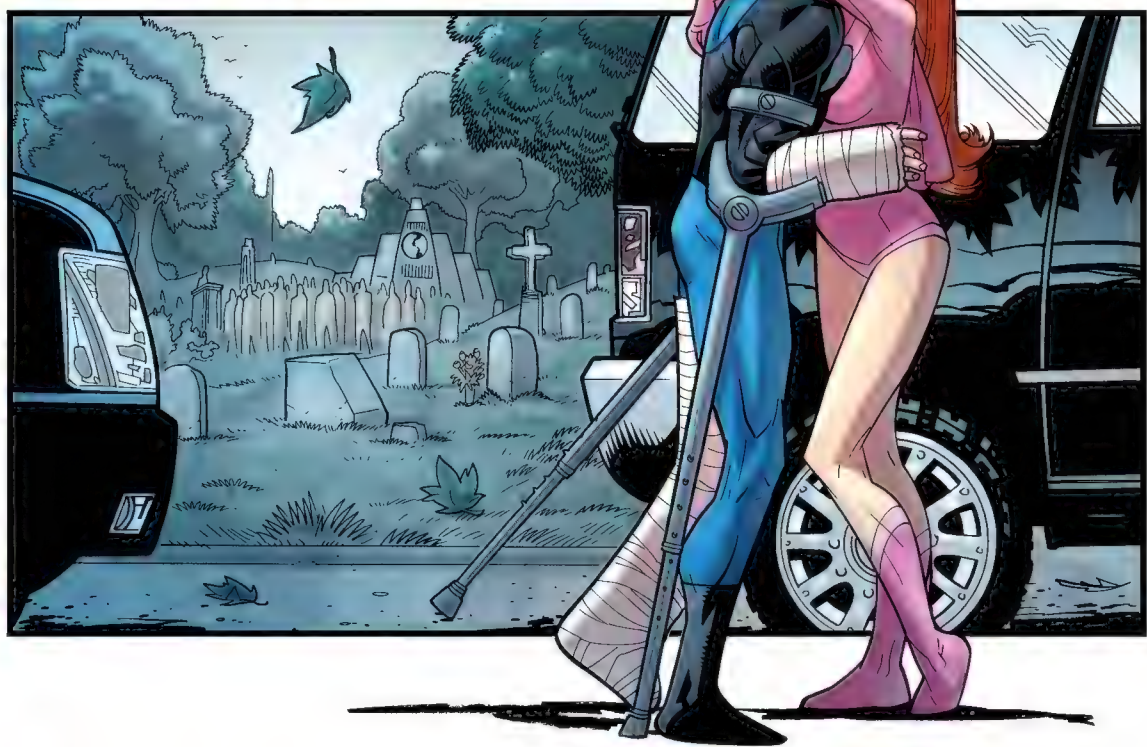




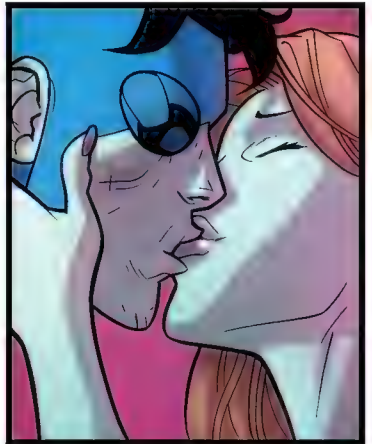
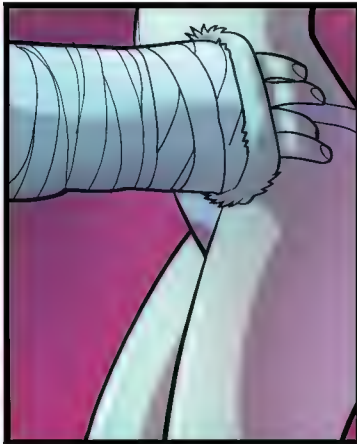
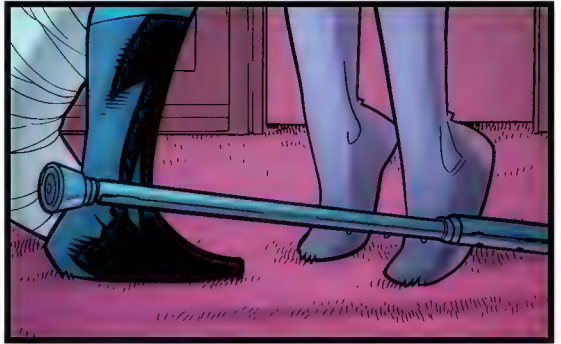
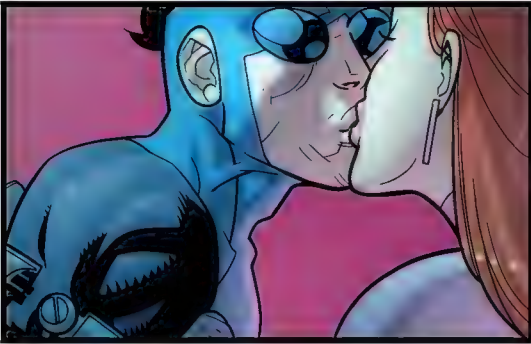
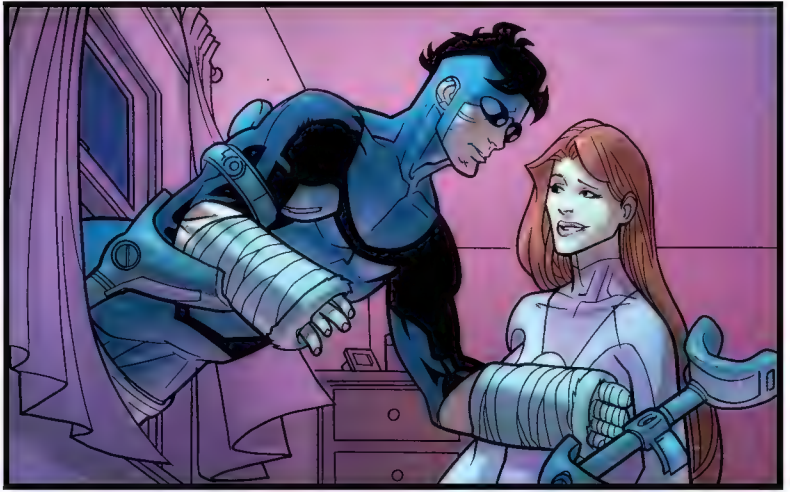
I'M A WRECK, I JUST--IT'S BEEN SO HARD, I CAME OUT OF MY COMA, YOU WERE FIGHTING CONQUEST-- I REBUILT MYSELF.



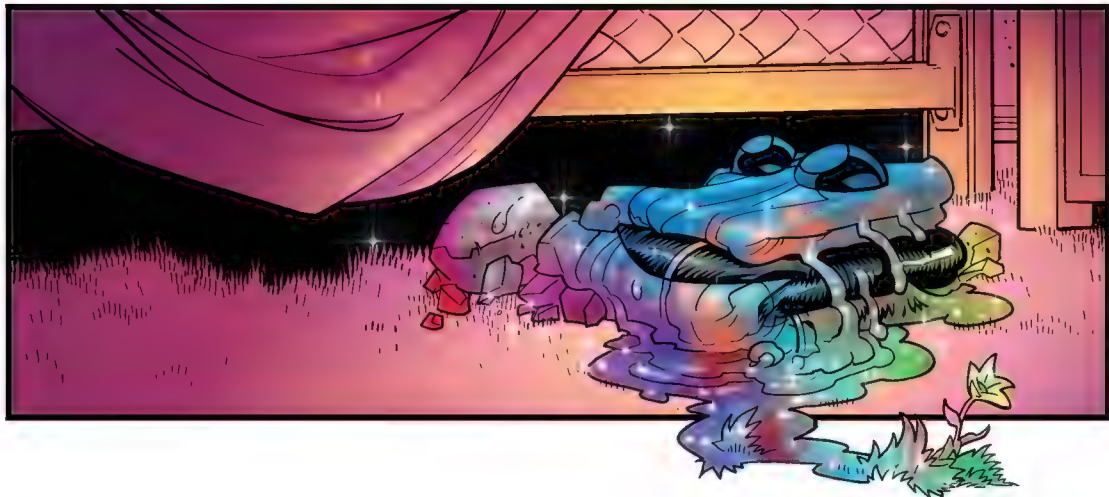
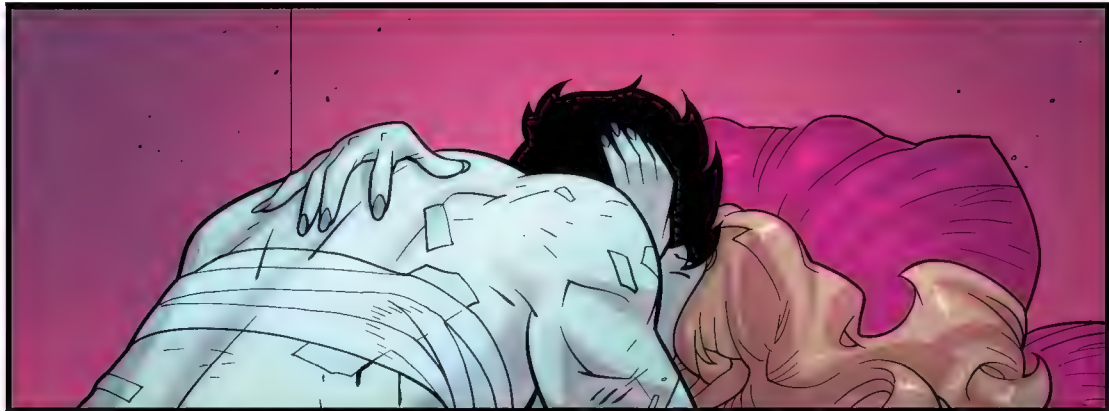
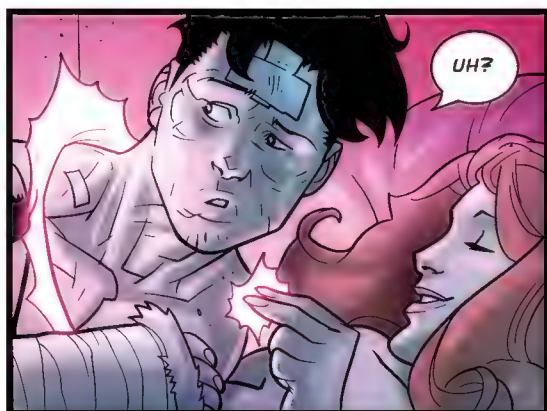
I'M SORRY, I JUST... I THOUGHT I'D LOST YOU. I CAN'T STOP THINKING ABOUT HOW YOU'RE HERE AND OKAY AND...



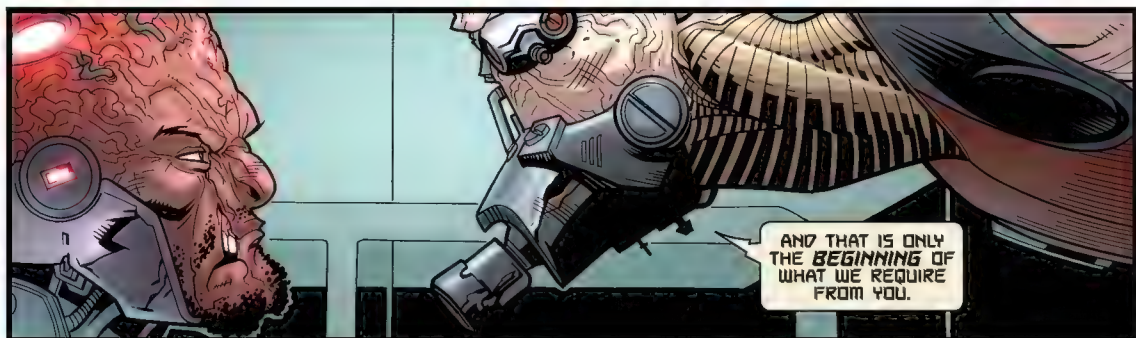
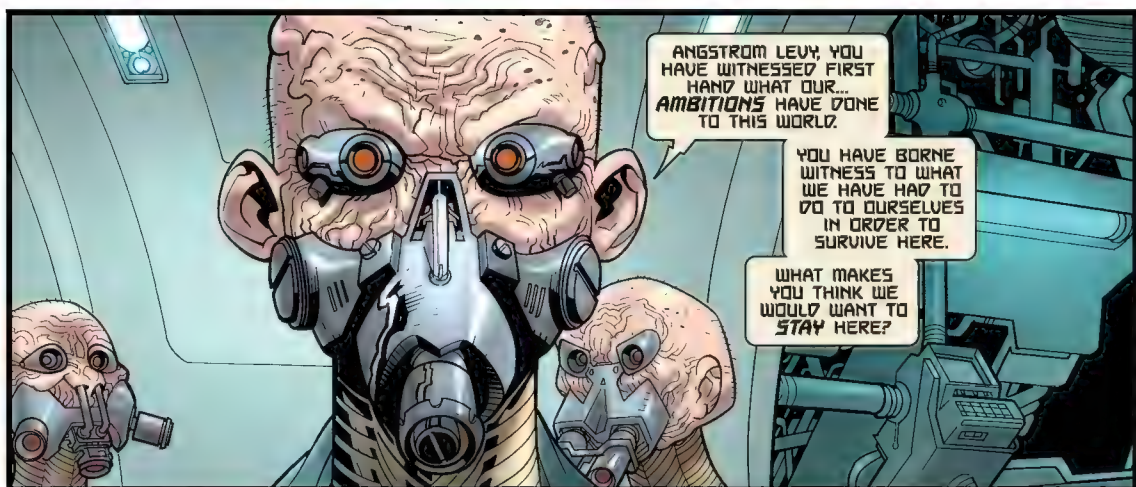










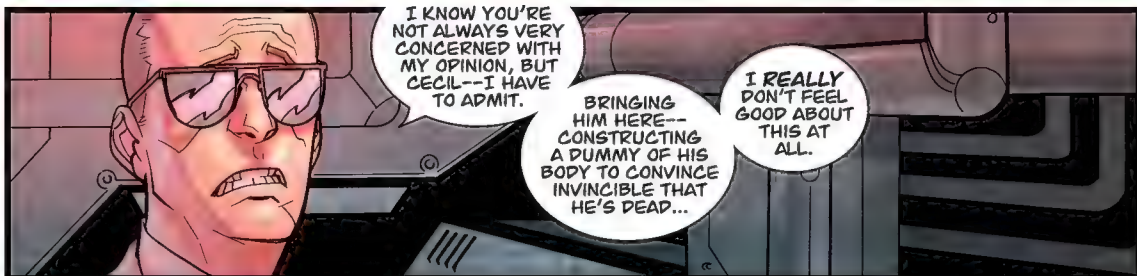
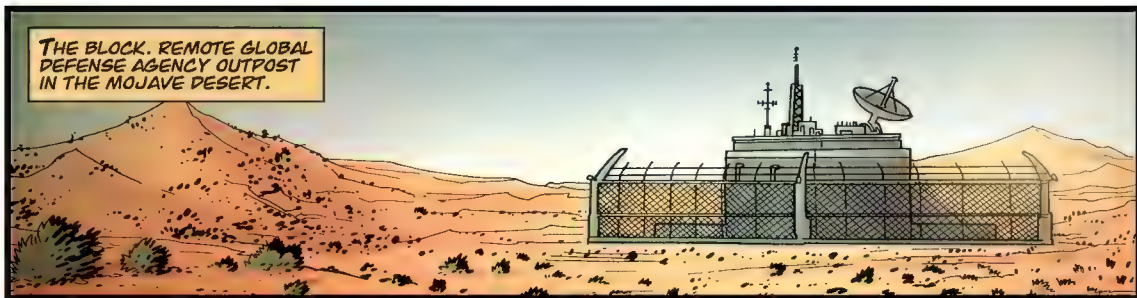








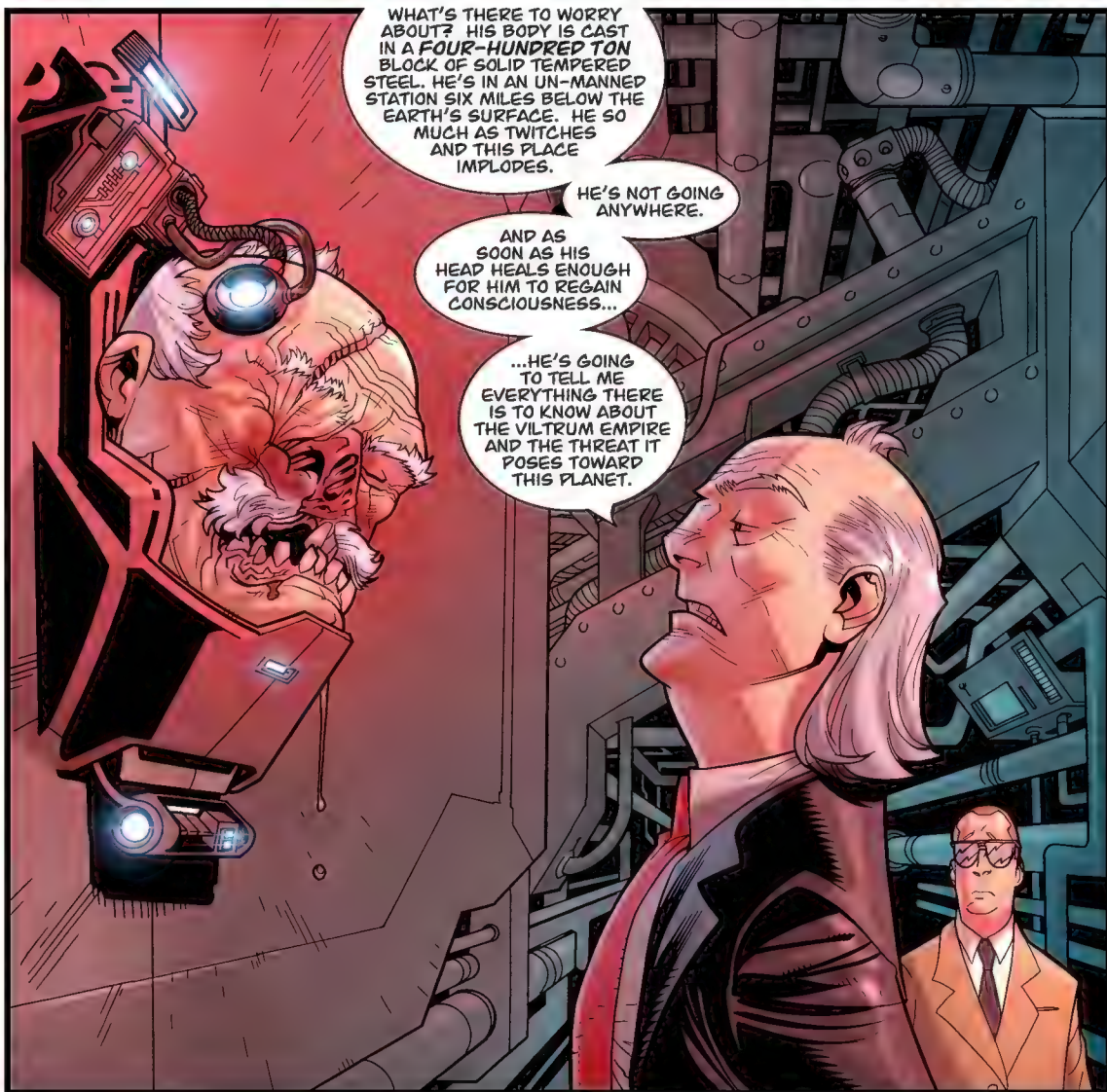
THE BLOCK. REMOTE GLOBAL  
DEFENSE AGENCY OUTPOST  
IN THE MOJAVE DESERT.



I KNOW YOU'RE  
NOT ALWAYS VERY  
CONCERNED WITH  
MY OPINION, BUT  
CECIL--I HAVE  
TO ADMIT.

BRINGING  
HIM HERE--  
CONSTRUCTING  
A DUMMY OF HIS  
BODY TO CONVINCE  
INVINCIBLE THAT  
HE'S DEAD...

I REALLY  
DON'T FEEL  
GOOD ABOUT  
THIS AT  
ALL.



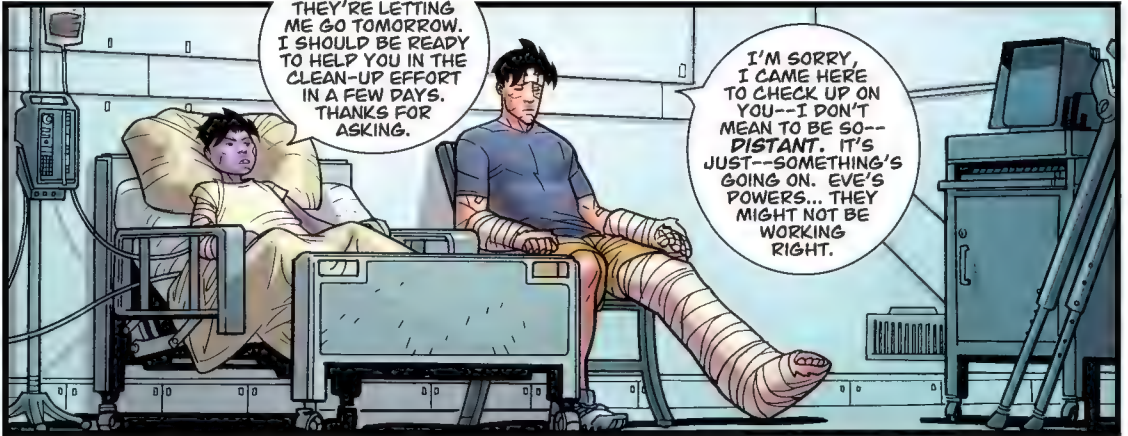
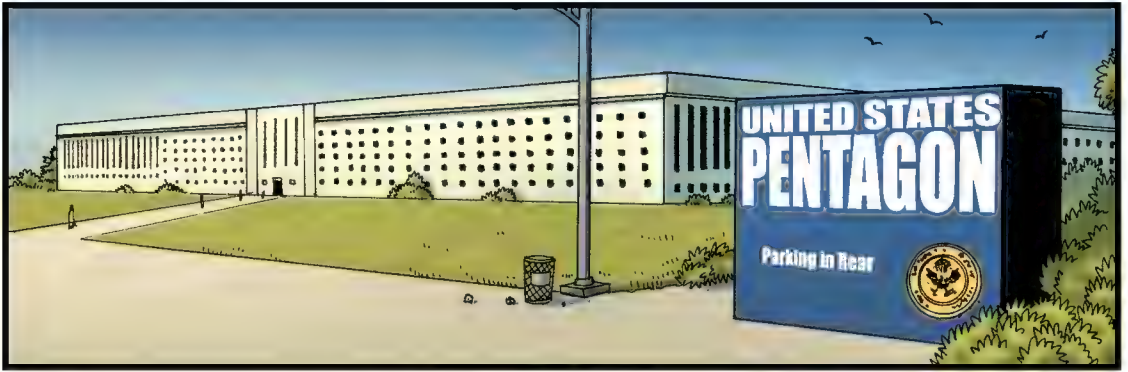
WHAT'S THERE TO WORRY  
ABOUT? HIS BODY IS CAST  
IN A FOUR-HUNDRED TON  
BLOCK OF SOLID TEMPERED  
STEEL. HE'S IN AN UN-MANNED  
STATION SIX MILES BELOW THE  
EARTH'S SURFACE. HE SO  
MUCH AS TWITCHES  
AND THIS PLACE  
IMPLODES.

HE'S NOT GOING  
ANYWHERE.

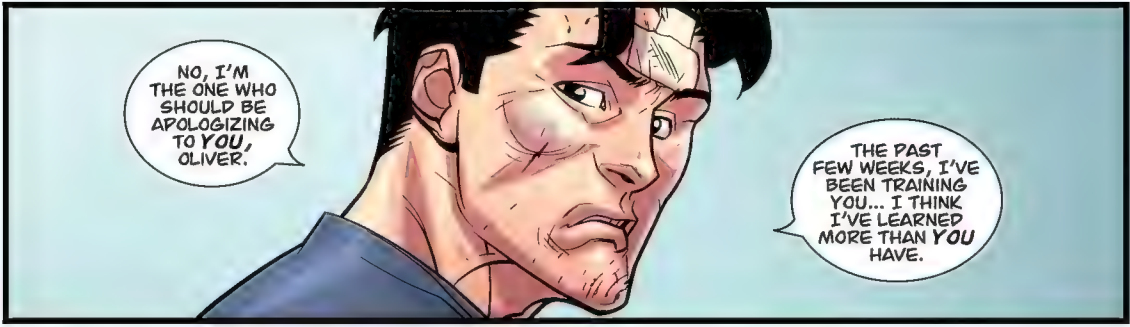
AND AS  
SOON AS HIS  
HEAD HEALS ENOUGH  
FOR HIM TO REGAIN  
CONSCIOUSNESS...

...HE'S GOING  
TO TELL ME  
EVERYTHING THERE  
IS TO KNOW ABOUT  
THE VILTRUM EMPIRE  
AND THE THREAT IT  
POSES TOWARD  
THIS PLANET.









NO, I'M  
THE ONE WHO  
SHOULD BE  
APOLOGIZING  
TO YOU,  
OLIVER.

THE PAST  
FEW WEEKS, I'VE  
BEEN TRAINING  
YOU... I THINK  
I'VE LEARNED  
MORE THAN YOU  
HAVE.

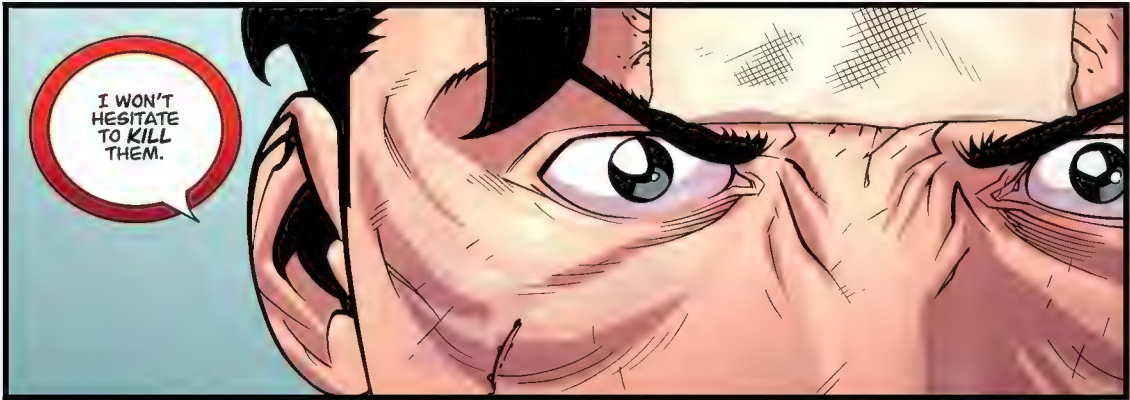


I SCOLDED  
YOU... I YELLED  
AT YOU--THOUGHT  
I KNEW BETTER.  
I THOUGHT  
YOU WERE  
MISGUIDED,  
NAIVE--

I WAS  
WRONG.

YOU WERE  
RIGHT THE  
WHOLE TIME--  
BUT I'VE  
LEARNED MY  
LESSON.

SOMEONE  
TRIES TO HURT  
MY FAMILY--  
SOMEONE I LOVE--  
IF THERE'S ANOTHER  
VILLAIN OUT THERE  
PUTTING LIVES IN  
DANGER--WHO'S  
JUST GOING TO  
KEEP COMING AT  
ME UNTIL THEY  
FINALLY  
SUCCEED...



I WON'T  
HESITATE  
TO KILL  
THEM.








# CHAPTER 66



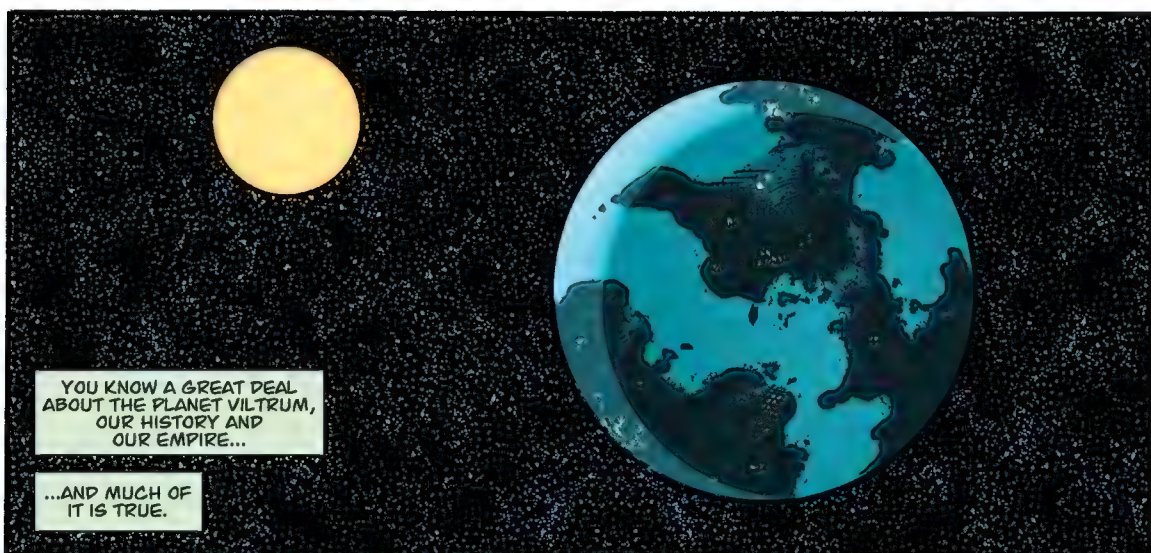




THERE ARE  
LESS THAN FIFTY  
FULL-BLOODED  
VILTRUMITES LEFT  
IN THE UNIVERSE...  
BUT IT WAS NOT  
ALWAYS THIS  
WAY.

ALLEN, MY  
FRIEND... IT IS  
TIME SOMEONE  
KNEW THE  
TRUTH ABOUT  
THE VILTRUM  
EMPIRE.





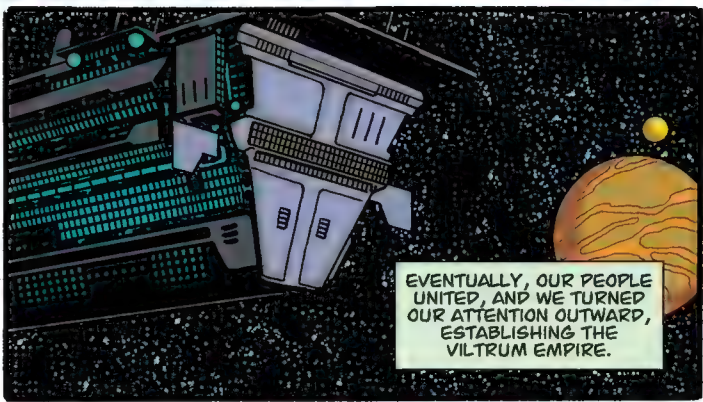
YOU KNOW A GREAT DEAL  
ABOUT THE PLANET VILTRUM,  
OUR HISTORY AND  
OUR EMPIRE...

...AND MUCH OF  
IT IS TRUE.



WE WERE A VIOLENT RACE  
WHO VALUED STRENGTH  
ABOVE ALL ELSE.

TO RID OURSELVES OF  
ANY WEAKNESS WE  
SLAUGHTERED EACH  
OTHER UNTIL WE WERE  
BRED INTO THE  
VILTRUMITES YOU  
KNOW TODAY.



EVENTUALLY, OUR PEOPLE  
UNITED, AND WE TURNED  
OUR ATTENTION OUTWARD,  
ESTABLISHING THE  
VILTRUM EMPIRE.



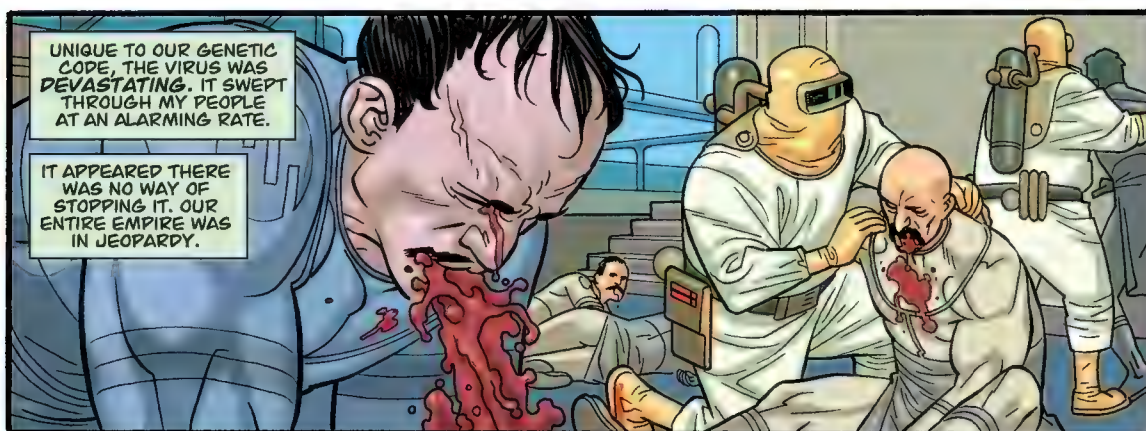
AN EMPIRE THAT CONTINUED  
TO EXPAND AT AN ASTOUNDING  
RATE FOR NEARLY  
ONE-THOUSAND YEARS.



UNTIL OUR  
ENEMIES MADE  
A WEAPON  
CAPABLE OF  
HURTING US.

THEY MADE  
A VIRUS.





UNIQUE TO OUR GENETIC CODE, THE VIRUS WAS DEVASTATING. IT SWEEPED THROUGH MY PEOPLE AT AN ALARMING RATE.

IT APPEARED THERE WAS NO WAY OF STOPPING IT. OUR ENTIRE EMPIRE WAS IN JEOPARDY.



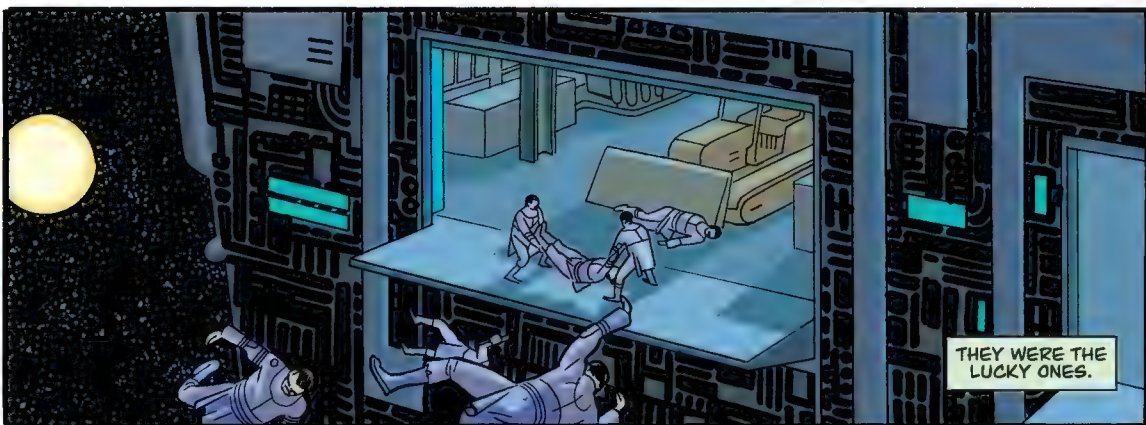
ATTEMPTS WERE MADE TO GUARANTINE THOSE WHO BECAME INFECTED... BUT IT WAS TOO LATE.

ALMOST THE ENTIRE POPULATION WAS INFECTED WITH WHAT WOULD BECOME KNOWN AS THE SCOURGE VIRUS.



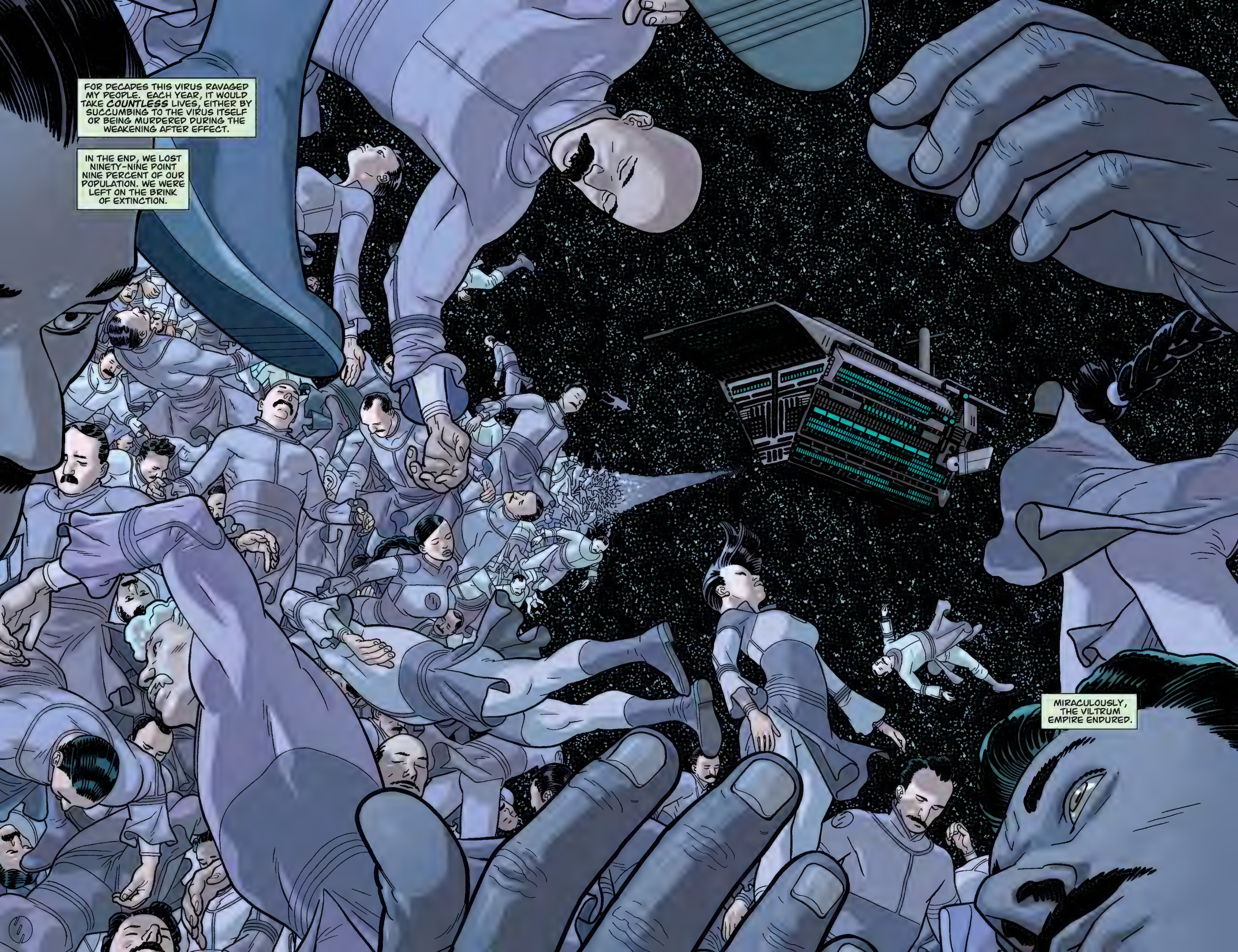
THOSE WHO SURVIVED THE VIRUS DISCOVERED ITS DEADLY AFTER EFFECTS.

THERE WAS A SHORT PERIOD OF TIME AFTER THE VIRUS HAD LEFT THEIR SYSTEM, WHERE THEIR STRENGTH AND INVULNERABILITY HAD BEEN GREATLY DIMINISHED.



THEY WERE THE LUCKY ONES.



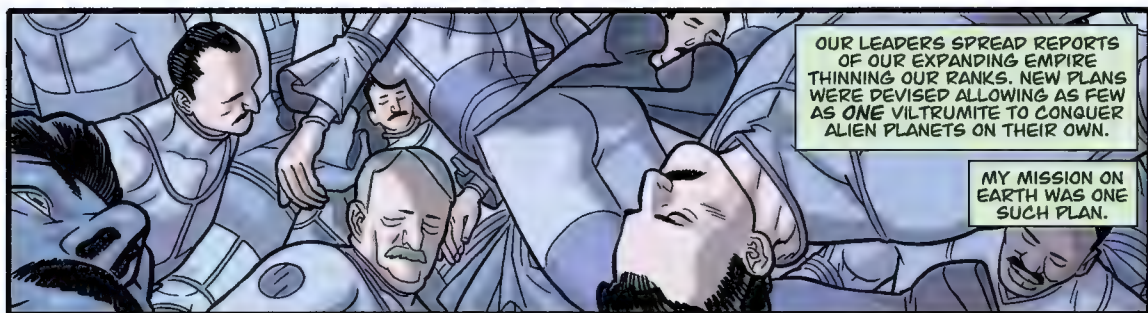


FOR DECADES THIS VIRUS RAVAGED MY PEOPLE. EACH YEAR, IT WOULD TAKE COUNTLESS LIVES, EITHER BY SUCCUMBING TO THE VIRUS ITSELF OR BEING MURDERED DURING THE WEAKENING AFTER EFFECT.

IN THE END, WE LOST NINETY-NINE POINT NINE PERCENT OF OUR POPULATION. WE WERE LEFT ON THE BRINK OF EXTINCTION.

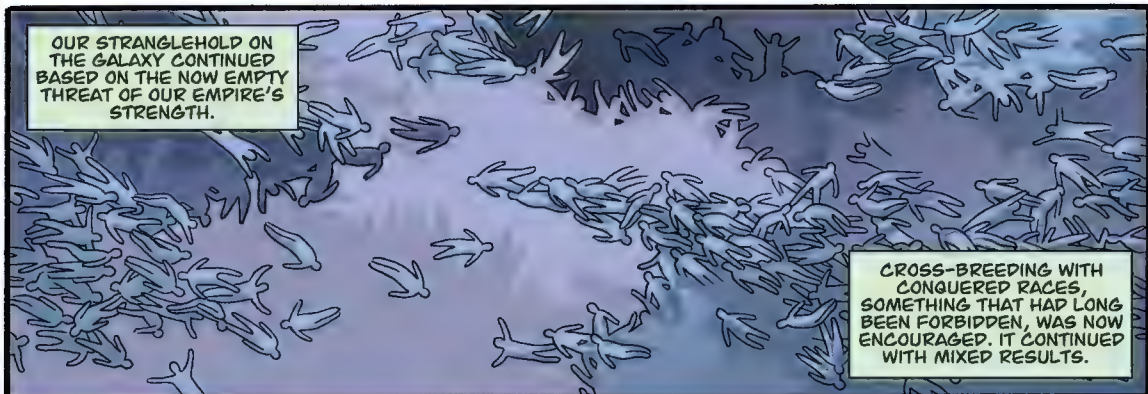
MIRACULOUSLY, THE VILTRUM EMPIRE ENDURED.





OUR LEADERS SPREAD REPORTS OF OUR EXPANDING EMPIRE THINNING OUR RANKS. NEW PLANS WERE DEVISED ALLOWING AS FEW AS ONE VILTRUMITE TO CONQUER ALIEN PLANETS ON THEIR OWN.

MY MISSION ON EARTH WAS ONE SUCH PLAN.



OUR STRANGLEHOLD ON THE GALAXY CONTINUED BASED ON THE NOW EMPTY THREAT OF OUR EMPIRE'S STRENGTH.

CROSS-BREEDING WITH CONQUERED RACES, SOMETHING THAT HAD LONG BEEN FORBIDDEN, WAS NOW ENCOURAGED. IT CONTINUED WITH MIXED RESULTS.



UNTIL EARTH, UNTIL MY SON. I NEVER TOLD HIM OUR MAIN REASON FOR CONQUERING EARTH... WHAT MADE IT SO IMPORTANT.

HUMAN DNA IS ALMOST ONE-HUNDRED PERCENT COMPATIBLE WITH VILTRUMITES. EARTH IS TO BECOME A BREEDING CAMP.



THE RESULTS OF THE SCOURGE VIRUS WERE HIDDEN, BUT NEVER FORGOTTEN.

OUR PLANET, CUT OFF FROM ANY OUTSIDE RACES, NOW STANDS AS A TRIBUTE TO OUR FALLEN BRETHREN. A REMINDER OF WHAT WE'VE SACRIFICED TO CONTINUE OUR QUEST FOR INTER-PLANETARY DOMINATION.





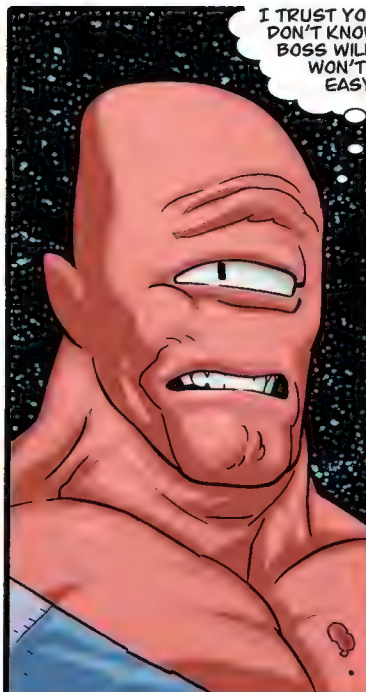
A QUEST  
I NOW SEE  
AS THE  
POINTLESS  
ENDEAVOR  
THAT IT  
IS...

WHAT THEY PLAN TO DO  
WITH EARTH... I WAS  
BORN IN A BREEDING  
CAMP. I WOULDN'T WISH  
THAT ON ANYONE. WE  
HAVE TO WARN  
MARK.



NO.

YOU HAVE  
TO TAKE ME  
TO YOUR PEOPLE.  
I NEED TO MEET  
WITH THE COALITION  
OF PLANETS.  
IMMEDIATELY.



I TRUST YOU, BUT I  
DON'T KNOW IF MY  
BOSS WILL. THIS  
WON'T BE  
EASY.



IT DOESN'T MATTER. IF  
WE'RE GOING TO BE ABLE  
TO SAVE EARTH AND STOP  
THE VILTRUM EMPIRE  
ONCE AND FOR ALL, THE  
COALITION NEEDS TO  
KNOW EVERYTHING  
I KNOW.

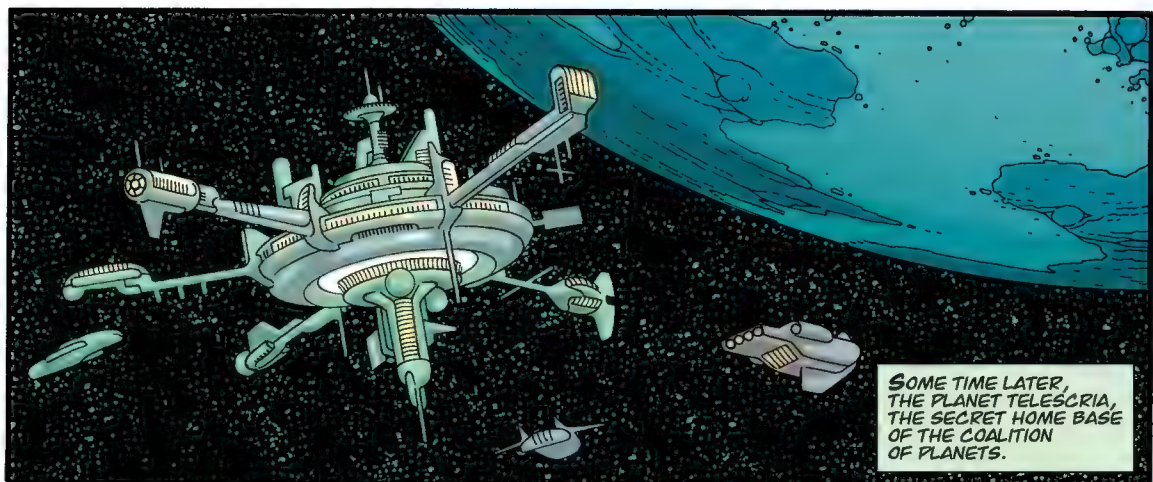


WE'LL ALSO NEED THE INFORMATION  
CONTAINED IN MY BOOKS THAT YOU  
SCANNED. I WROTE EVERYTHING  
DOWN SO I WOULDN'T NEED TO  
REMEMBER IT ALL--AND THERE  
IS VALUABLE INFORMATION  
ENCODING IN THE  
WORDS.

INFORMATION  
THAT WILL GAIN  
YOUR BOSS'S  
TRUST.

OKAY, LET  
ME GET MY  
GEAR AND  
THEN WE'LL  
GO.





SOME TIME LATER,  
THE PLANET TELESORIA,  
THE SECRET HOME BASE  
OF THE COALITION  
OF PLANETS.



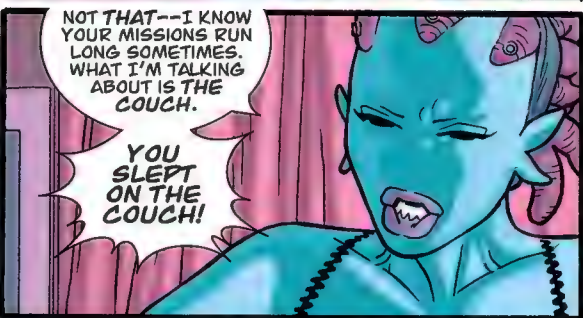
WHERE  
HAVE YOU  
BEEN?!



TELIA,  
PEAR,  
UH--I'M  
SORRY.

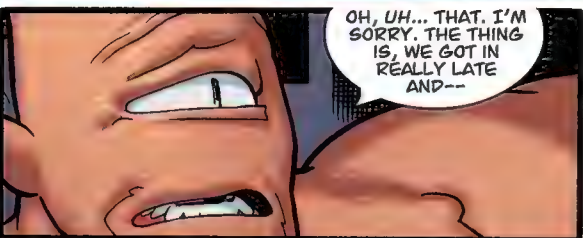
I WAS ON  
THAT MISSION  
AND I WAS TAKEN  
PRISONER BY THE  
VILTRUMITES. THEY  
HELD ME IN PRISON  
FOR A FEW MONTHS,  
I WAS JUST  
RECENTLY ABLE  
TO ESCAPE.

I WOULD  
HAVE CONTACTED  
YOU IF I COULD  
HAVE--BUT THERE  
WAS NEVER AN  
OPPORTUNITY  
AND--



NOT THAT--I KNOW  
YOUR MISSIONS RUN  
LONG SOMETIMES.  
WHAT I'M TALKING  
ABOUT IS THE  
COUCH.

YOU  
SLEPT  
ON THE  
COUCH!



OH, UH... THAT. I'M  
SORRY. THE THING  
IS, WE GOT IN  
REALLY LATE  
AND--





I DON'T CARE HOW LATE YOU GET BACK FROM A MISSION. YOU KNOW THE RULES. YOU WAKE ME UP!

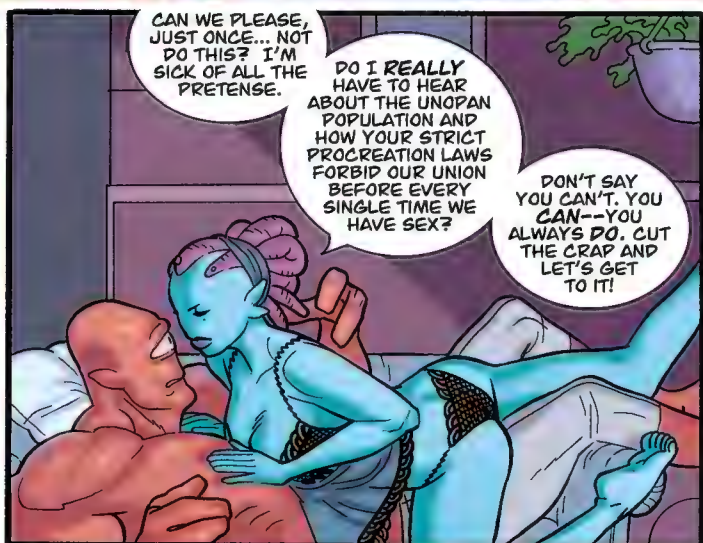
I'VE BEEN LIVING WITHOUT FOR MONTHS AND I AM HUNGRY! NOW GIVE IT TO ME YOU UNOPAN GOD.

GIVE IT TO ME NOW!



TELIA, PLEASE. I CAN'T RIGHT NOW.

STOP--!



CAN WE PLEASE, JUST ONCE... NOT DO THIS? I'M SICK OF ALL THE PRETENSE.

DO I REALLY HAVE TO HEAR ABOUT THE UNOPAN POPULATION AND HOW YOUR STRICT PROCREATION LAWS FORBID OUR UNION BEFORE EVERY SINGLE TIME WE HAVE SEX?

DON'T SAY YOU CAN'T. YOU CAN--YOU ALWAYS DO. CUT THE CRAP AND LET'S GET TO IT!



NO, THAT'S NOT IT--

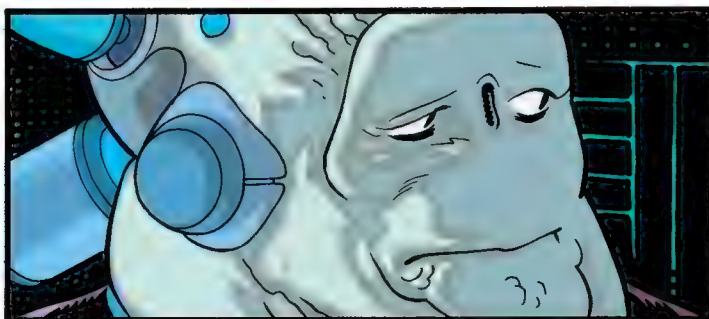
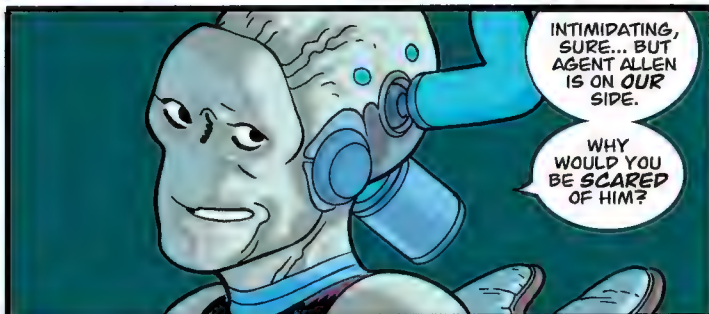
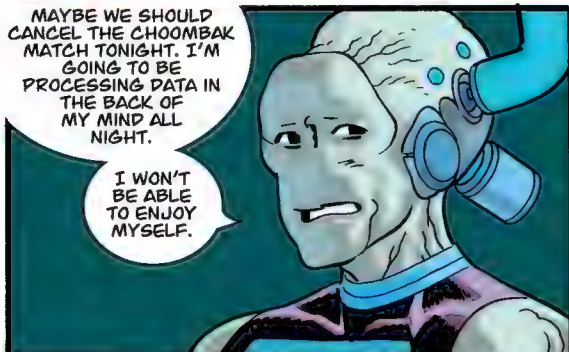
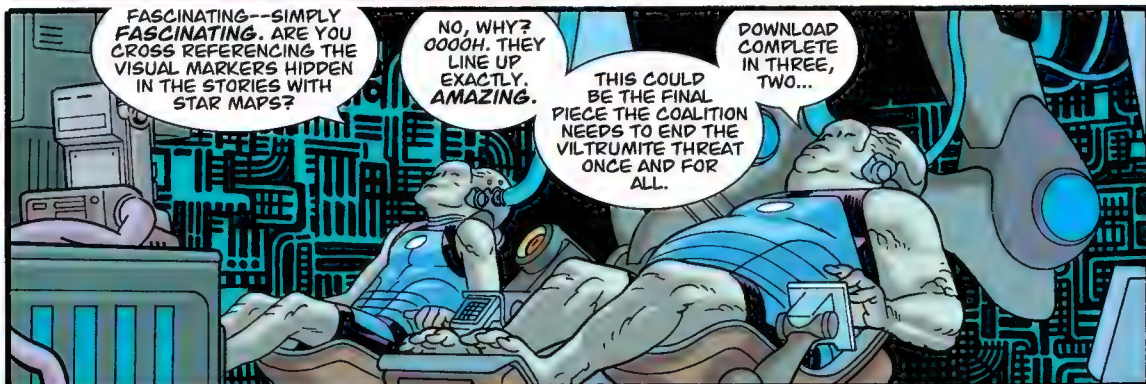
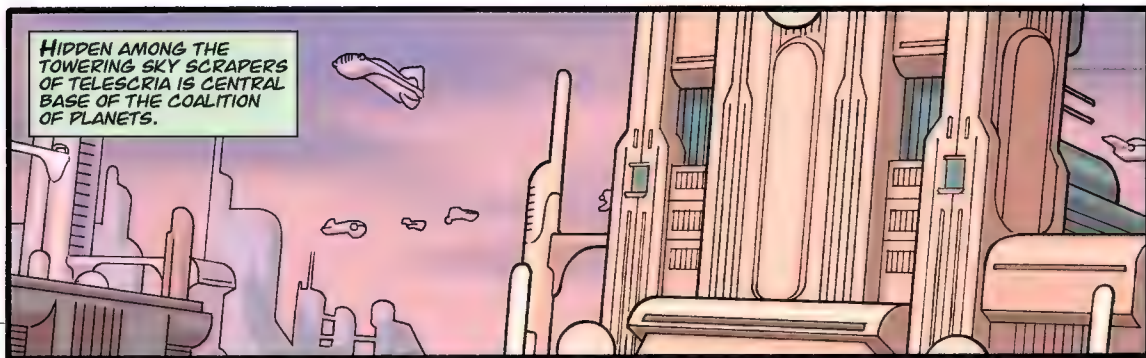


WAIT A MINUTE... DID YOU SAY "WE" GOT IN REALLY LATE?

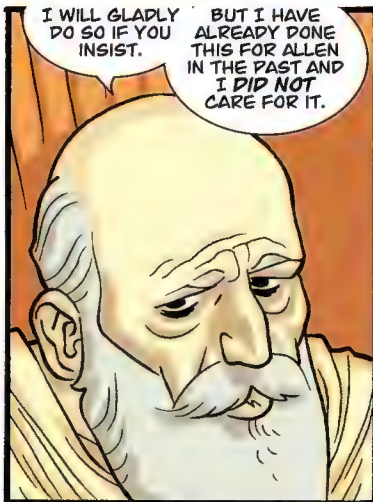
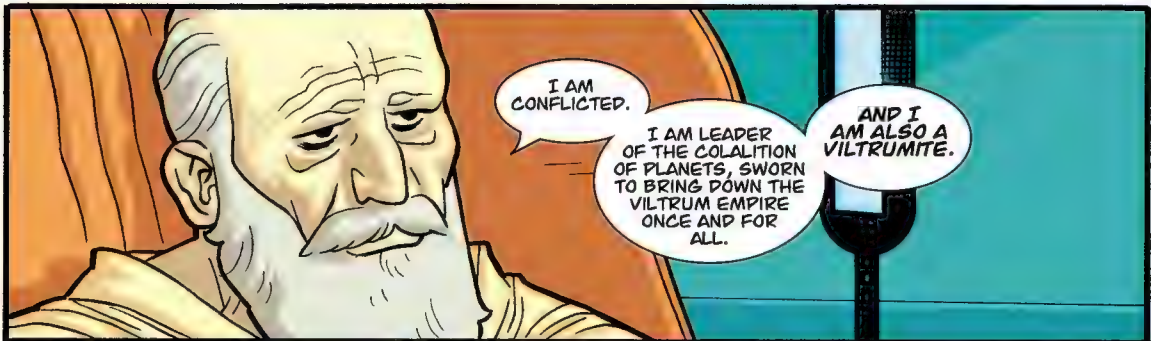
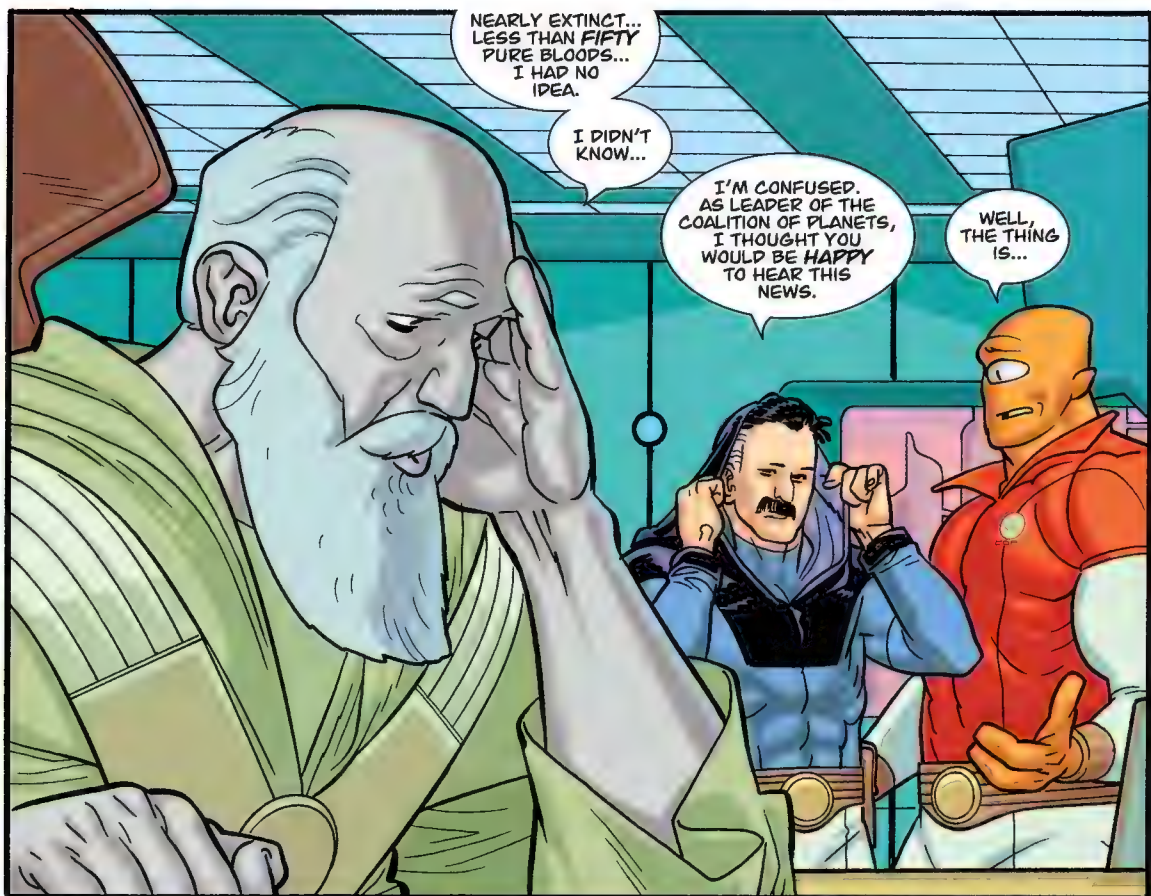
















BUT I THOUGHT--I ALWAYS  
FEARED THAT THERE WAS  
SOMETHING WRONG WITH ME,  
FOR TURNING MY BACK  
AGAINST THE EMPIRE--  
VILTRUMITES HAVE  
ALWAYS BEEN  
LOYAL...

...I  
THOUGHT  
I WAS THE  
FIRST.

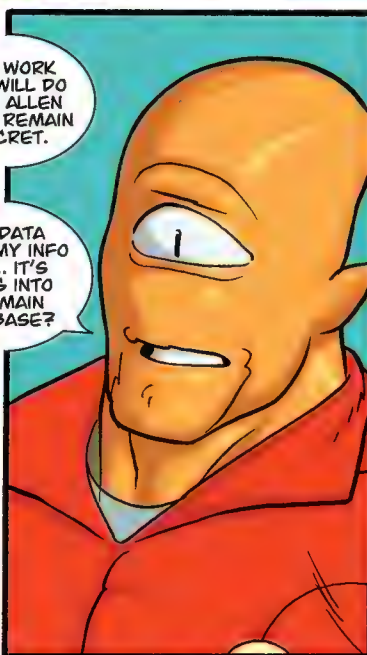
MY  
BETRAYAL  
WAS HIDDEN,  
REMOVED FROM  
HISTORY'S  
RECORD.

BUT THERE  
IS NO TIME FOR  
THIS. WE HAVE  
ALREADY BEEN  
CONVERSING TOO  
LONG. PEOPLE WILL  
BECOME SUSPICIOUS  
THAT THIS ISN'T  
JUST A STANDARD  
BRIEFING.

I  
CAN'T  
HAVE  
THAT.



THERE IS AT LEAST ONE  
VILTRUMITE AGENT AMONG  
US, REPORTING BACK  
TO THE EMPIRE.



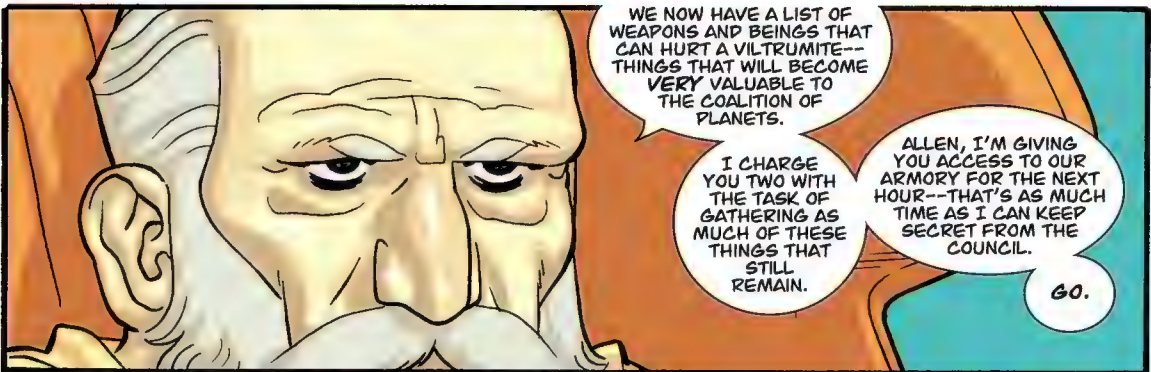
THE WORK  
YOU WILL DO  
WITH ALLEN  
MUST REMAIN  
SECRET.

THE DATA  
FROM MY INFO  
POD... IT'S  
GOING INTO  
THE MAIN  
DATABASE?



NO.

MY TRUSTED INNER-CIRCLE  
HAS A SEPARATE DATABASE  
FOR MORE SENSITIVE DATA.  
AND EVEN THEY WILL BE  
UNAWARE OF YOUR  
MISSION USING THIS  
DATA.



WE NOW HAVE A LIST OF  
WEAPONS AND BEINGS THAT  
CAN HURT A VILTRUMITE--  
THINGS THAT WILL BECOME  
VERY VALUABLE TO  
THE COALITION OF  
PLANETS.

I CHARGE  
YOU TWO WITH  
THE TASK OF  
GATHERING AS  
MUCH OF THESE  
THINGS THAT  
STILL  
REMAIN.

ALLEN, I'M GIVING  
YOU ACCESS TO OUR  
ARMORY FOR THE NEXT  
HOUR--THAT'S AS MUCH  
TIME AS I CAN KEEP  
SECRET FROM THE  
COUNCIL.

GO.



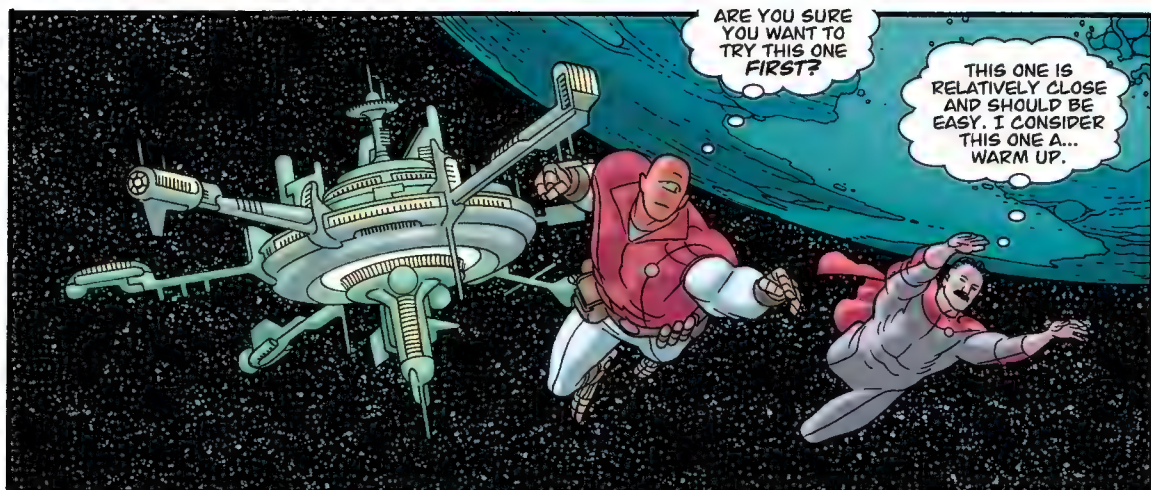


**SWEET!**

IT LOOKS  
COOL, BUT WITH  
YOUR STRENGTH  
AREN'T ALL THOSE  
GADGETS A LITTLE...  
UNNECESSARY?  
SEEMS LIKE THEY'LL  
JUST... SLOW  
YOU DOWN.

YEAH, AND  
YOUR SUIT'S  
ALL ABOUT  
PRACTICALITY.  
NICE CAPE,  
DUDE.





ARE YOU SURE YOU WANT TO TRY THIS ONE FIRST?

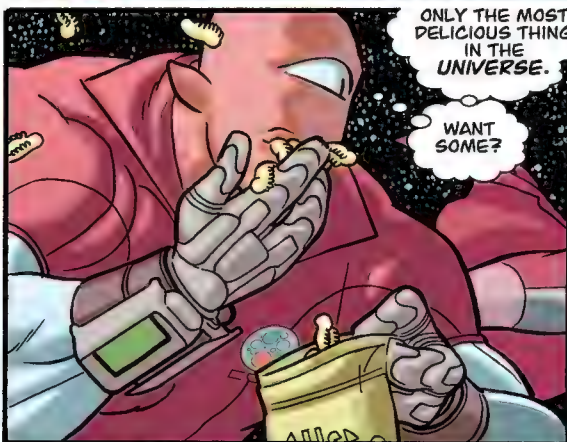
THIS ONE IS RELATIVELY CLOSE AND SHOULD BE EASY. I CONSIDER THIS ONE A... WARM UP.



CLOSE? GOOD. MY GIRLFRIEND ISN'T TOO HAPPY ABOUT ME LEAVING FOR ANOTHER MISSION SO SOON.

CAN'T BE TOO MAD, THOUGH. SHE PACKED ME SOME FRESH KANZLOK FOR THE TRIP. YUM.

HM? WHAT IS IT?



ONLY THE MOST DELICIOUS THING IN THE UNIVERSE.

WANT SOME?



PASS.







THERE IT IS, THE NEBULOID BELT. IT'S BEEN... ALMOST A HUNDRED YEARS SINCE I WAS HERE.

LOOKS EXACTLY THE SAME.

IT'S... A BUNCH OF ROCKS.



HAND ME YOUR INFO POD.



JUST SAYING...



THERE'S A CODE HIDDEN IN THE TEXT. THE NUMBER OF WORDS IN THESE PARAGRAPHS I WROTE ABOUT THE ASTEROIDS WILL SPELL OUT THE COORDINATES OF THE SPECIFIC ASTEROID WE'RE LOOKING FOR.

FOLLOW ME.



SO, IF IT'S BEEN ONE-HUNDRED YEARS, GIVE OR TAKE, AND THE ASTEROIDS ARE DRIFTING AT THIS SPEED, THEIR RELATIVE DISTANCE TO EACH OTHER WOULD BE SHIFTING...

AND...

YOU GOING TO BE ABLE TO FIND THIS... WHATEVER IT IS WE'RE AFTER?

ABSOLUTELY. JUST GIVE ME A MINUTE.



...

ANYTHING I CAN DO TO HELP?



NO, NO... ALMOST GOT IT.

THERE.



THIS IS IT.

HOW CAN YOU BE SURE? IT'S A ROCK-- THEY ALL LOOK THE SAME.



I'M NOT SURE... BUT THIS LOOKS FAMILIAR.



AH!







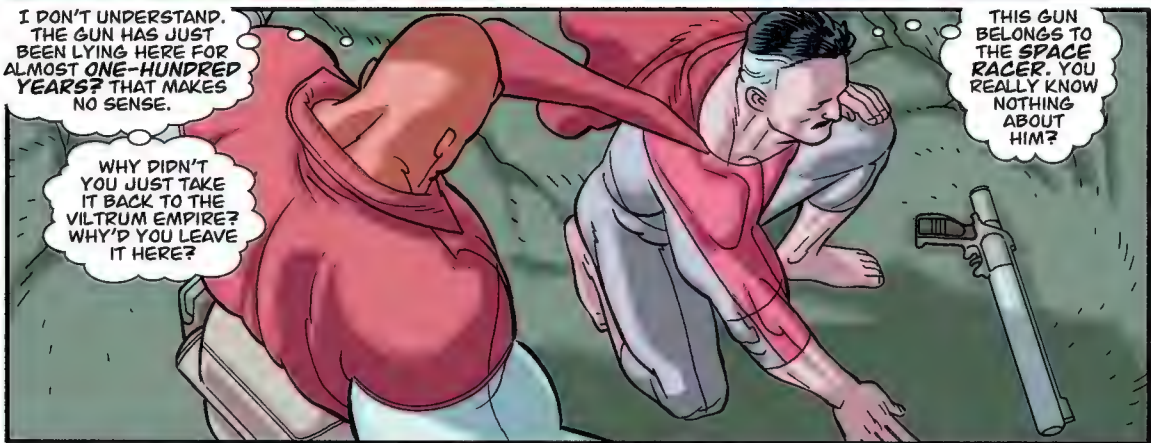
THERE IT IS.

WAIT, WHAT?

I DON'T UNDERSTAND. THE GUN HAS JUST BEEN LYING HERE FOR ALMOST ONE-HUNDRED YEARS? THAT MAKES NO SENSE.

WHY DIDN'T YOU JUST TAKE IT BACK TO THE VILTRUM EMPIRE? WHY'D YOU LEAVE IT HERE?

THIS GUN BELONGS TO THE SPACE RACER. YOU REALLY KNOW NOTHING ABOUT HIM?



SPACE RACER? YOU CALLED HIM THE SPACE RIDER IN THE BOOK.

I HAD TO CHANGE THE NAMES, I HAD NO IDEA WHO WOULD EVENTUALLY READ THOSE BOOKS. I WROTE THEM AS REMINDERS TO MYSELF--OR MY SON, IF WE NEEDED THEM. I DIDN'T WANT THEM TO FALL IN THE WRONG HANDS.

AND NO, I'M NOT EVEN CLOSE TO ONE-HUNDRED YEARS OLD. YOU DID YOUR JOB, NO ONE TALKS ABOUT THIS GUY ANYMORE.



THE SPACE RACER'S GUN--THE ONE THAT FIRES INDESTRUCTIBLE BLASTS THAT WILL SHOOT THROUGH ANYTHING--CAN ONLY BE FIRED BY HIM.

HE'S GOT SOME KIND OF BOND WITH THE GUN--IF ANYONE TRIES TO TAKE IT OR USE IT... IF I HAD TOUCHED IT WHILE HE WAS STILL ALIVE IT WOULD HAVE FLOWN INTO THE CENTER OF THE PILE OF RUBBLE I BURIED HIM UNDER AND GIVEN HIM THE MEANS TO ESCAPE.

MY ONLY OPTION WAS TO LEAVE IT EXACTLY WHERE HE DROPPED IT.



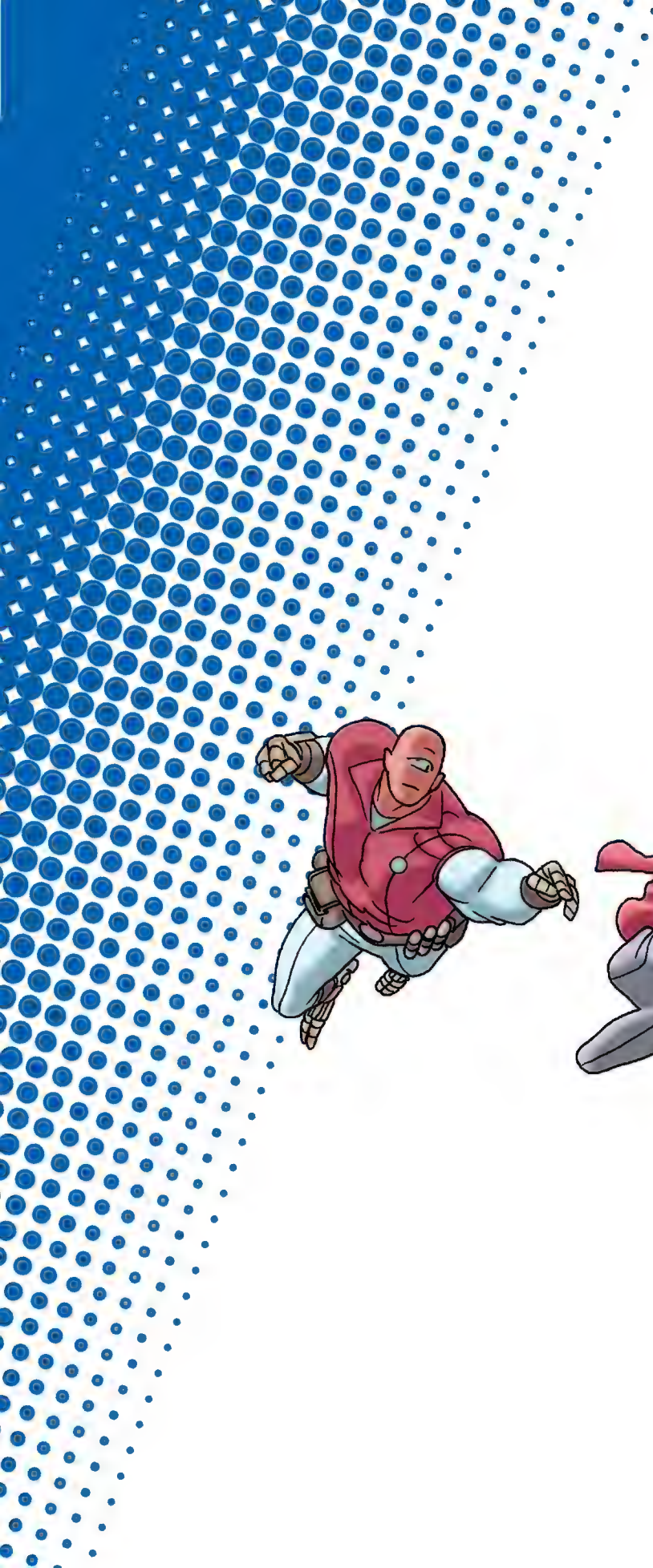










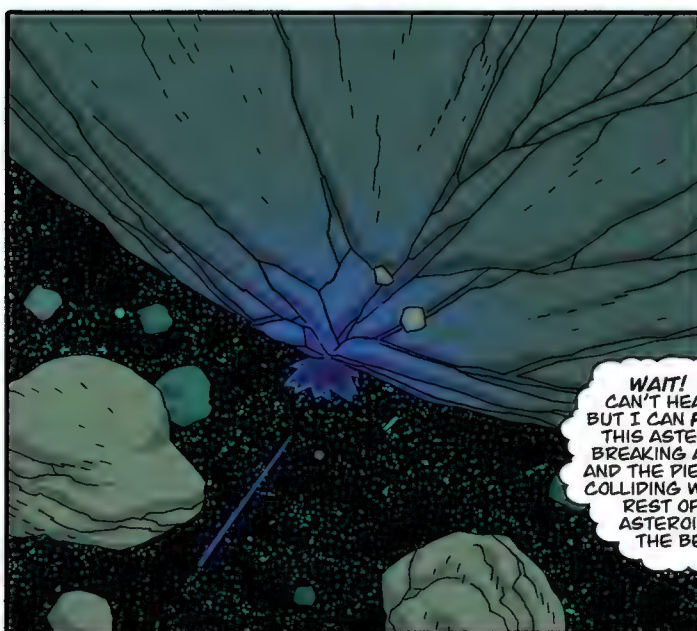
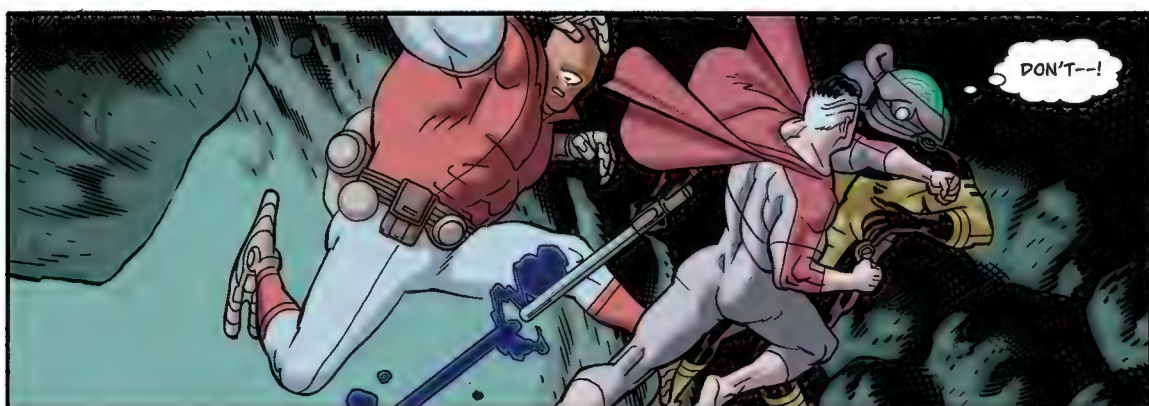




# CHAPTER 67



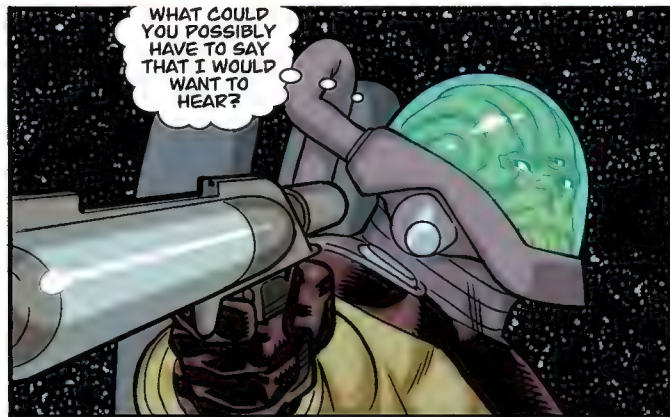
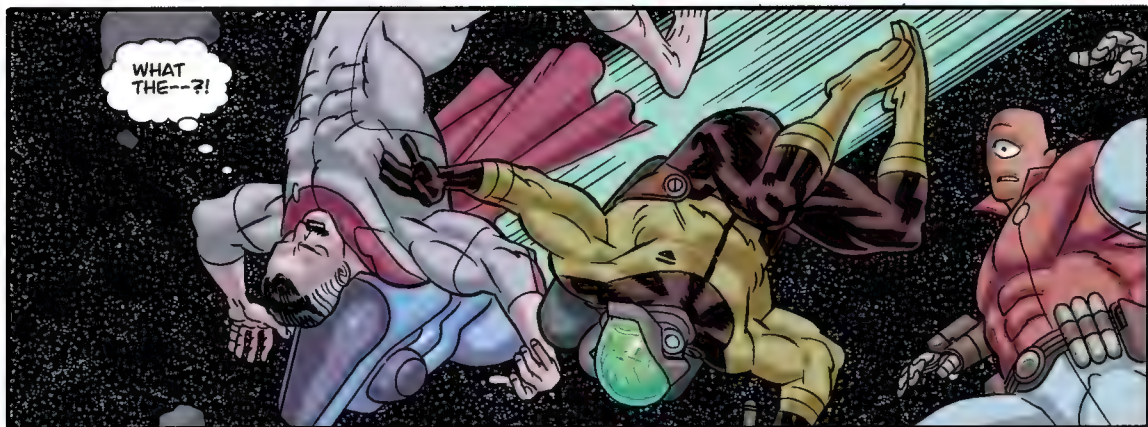
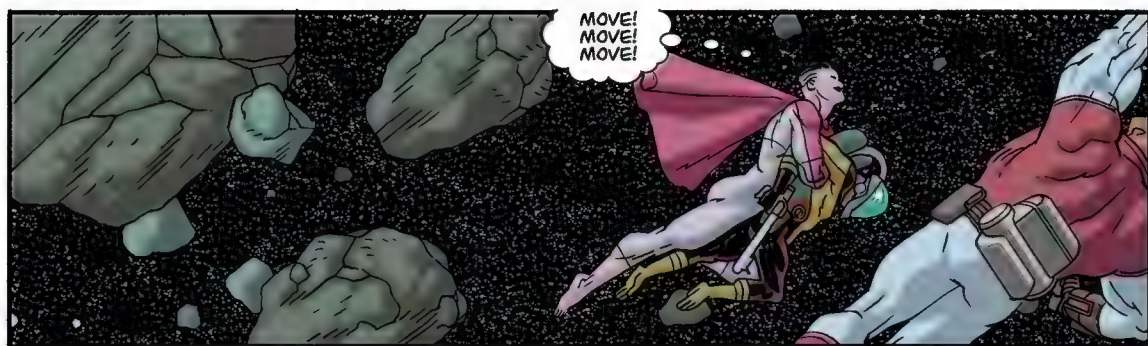
















WHY DO YOU THINK I'M HERE? WE CAME HERE TO FREE YOU--NOT TO FIGHT YOU.

WHY WOULD WE HAVE COME OTHERWISE?

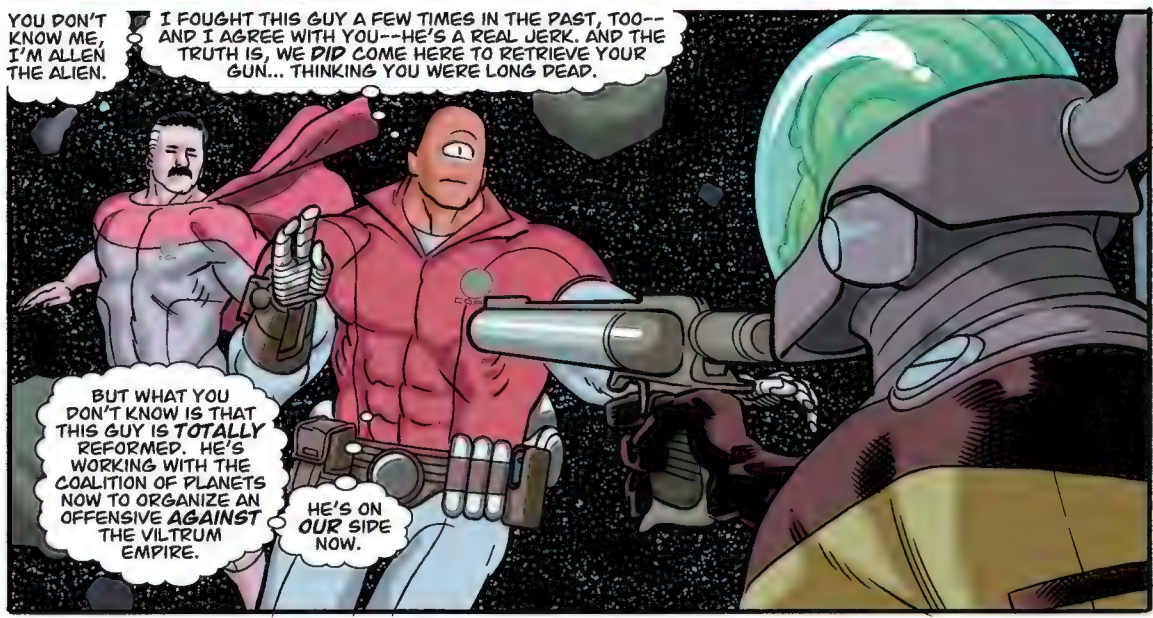


I THINK IT MORE LIKELY THAT YOU CAME HERE TO RETRIEVE MY WEAPON, THINKING I'D LONG SINCE PERISHED.



HE'S GOT YOU THERE.

MIND IF I STEP IN?

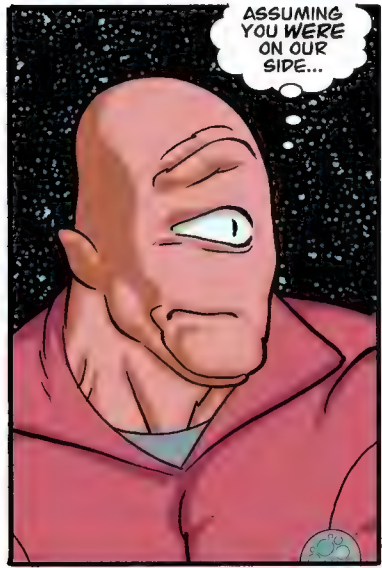


YOU DON'T KNOW ME, I'M ALLEN THE ALIEN.

I FOUGHT THIS GUY A FEW TIMES IN THE PAST, TOO-- AND I AGREE WITH YOU--HE'S A REAL JERK. AND THE TRUTH IS, WE DID COME HERE TO RETRIEVE YOUR GUN... THINKING YOU WERE LONG DEAD.

BUT WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW IS THAT THIS GUY IS TOTALLY REFORMED. HE'S WORKING WITH THE COALITION OF PLANETS NOW TO ORGANIZE AN OFFENSIVE AGAINST THE VILTRUM EMPIRE.

HE'S ON OUR SIDE NOW.



ASSUMING YOU WERE ON OUR SIDE...



WHAT ALLEN IS SAYING IS TRUE. I AM REFORMED. I'VE TURNED AGAINST THE VILTRUMITES AND AM NOW TRYING TO DO MY PART IN ENDING THEIR REIGN.



I AM VERY SORRY FOR WHAT I'VE PUT YOU THROUGH--BUT PLEASE DON'T HOLD MY PAST ACTIONS AGAINST THE COALITION--THEY MAY BE THE UNIVERSE'S LAST BEST HOPE AGAINST THE VILTRUM EMPIRE.



IF YOU COULD PLEASE  
JUST ACCOMPANY US  
BACK TO THE COALITION  
HEADQUARTERS YOU  
COULD SEE THAT WE  
ARE INDEED FIGHTING  
AGAINST THE  
VILTRUMITES.



WE COULD  
PROVIDE YOU WITH  
WHATEVER  
ASSURANCES--

I HAVE  
BEEN BURIED  
UNDER THAT  
RUBBLE FOR  
NEARLY ONE-  
HUNDRED  
YEARS...



I KNOW AND MY  
ASSOCIATE HAS  
SAID HE'S VERY  
SORRY ABOUT  
THAT, AND--



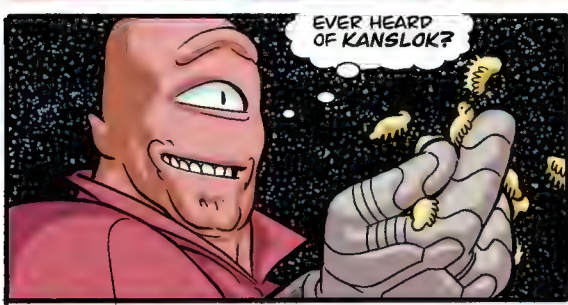
DO YOU  
HAVE ANY  
FOOD?



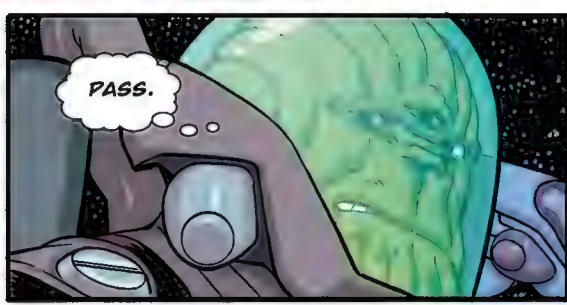
SURE DO!  
JUST GIVE ME  
A SECOND...



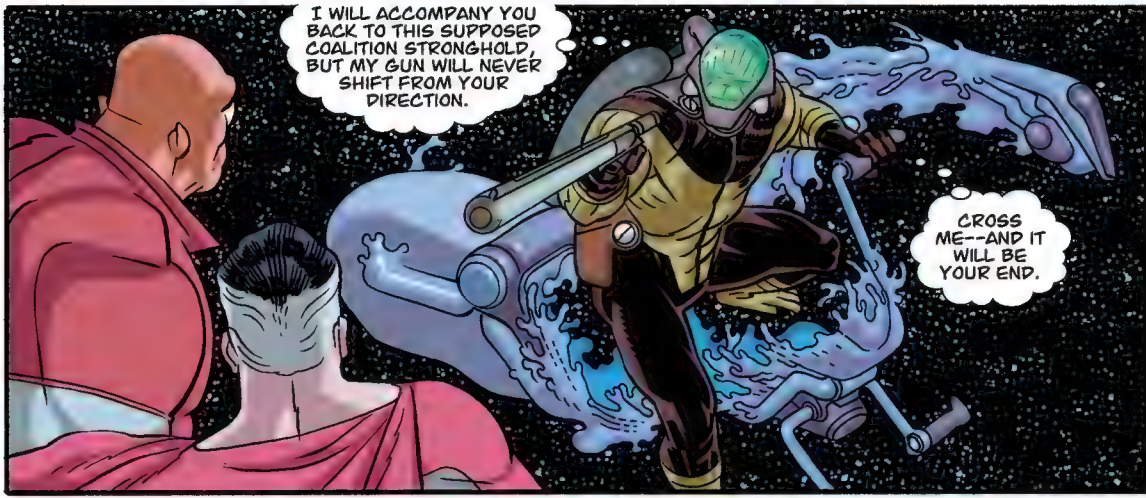
EVER HEARD  
OF KANSLOK?



PASS.



I WILL ACCOMPANY YOU  
BACK TO THIS SUPPOSED  
COALITION STRONGHOLD,  
BUT MY GUN WILL NEVER  
SHIFT FROM YOUR  
DIRECTION.



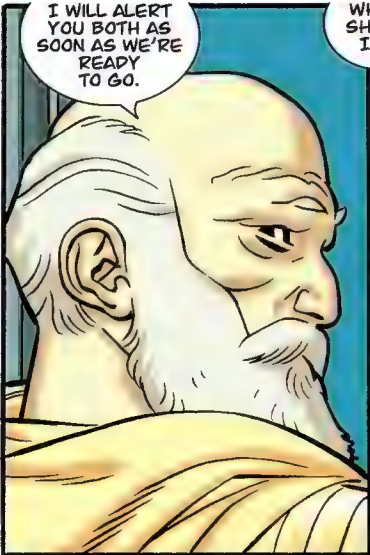
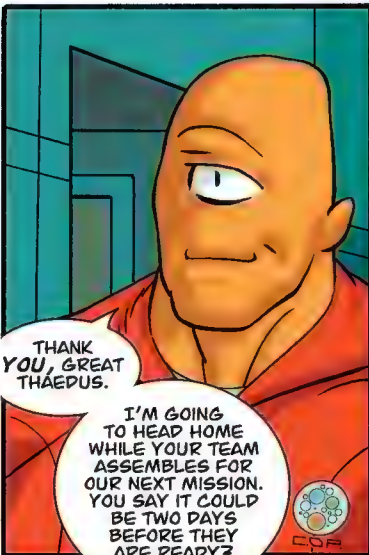
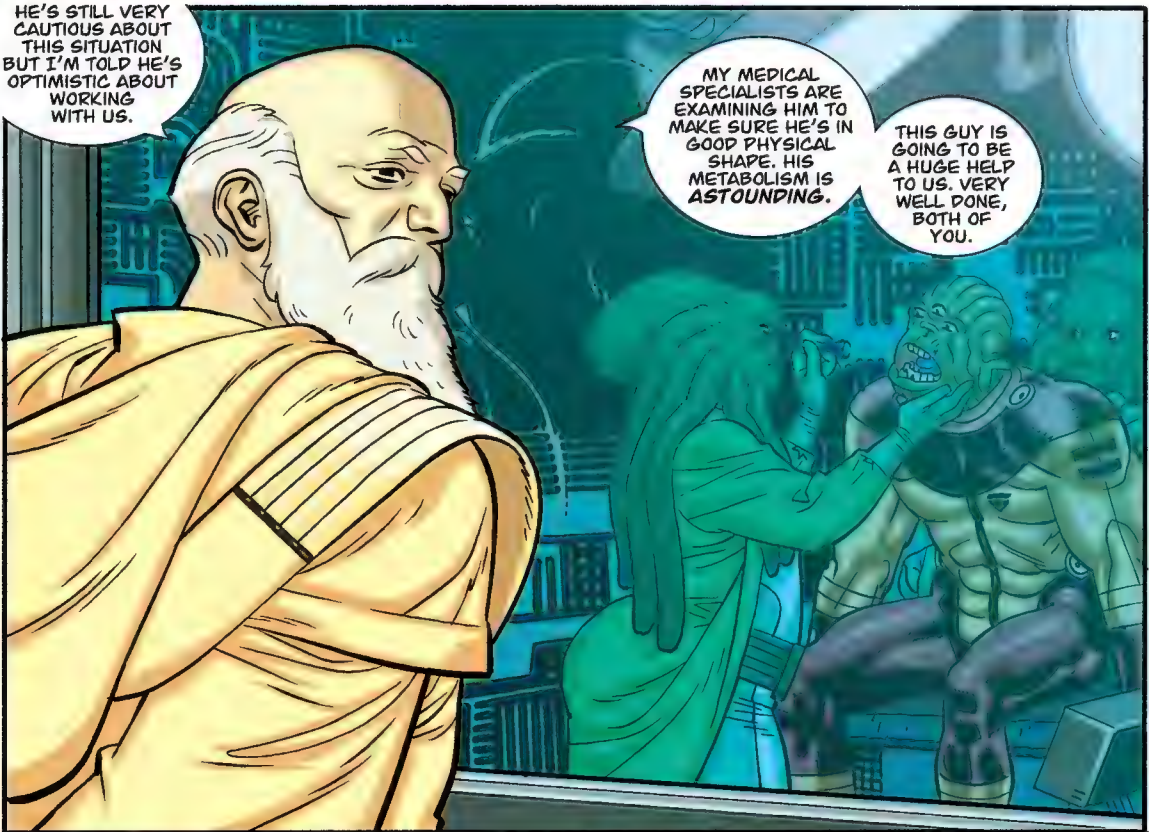
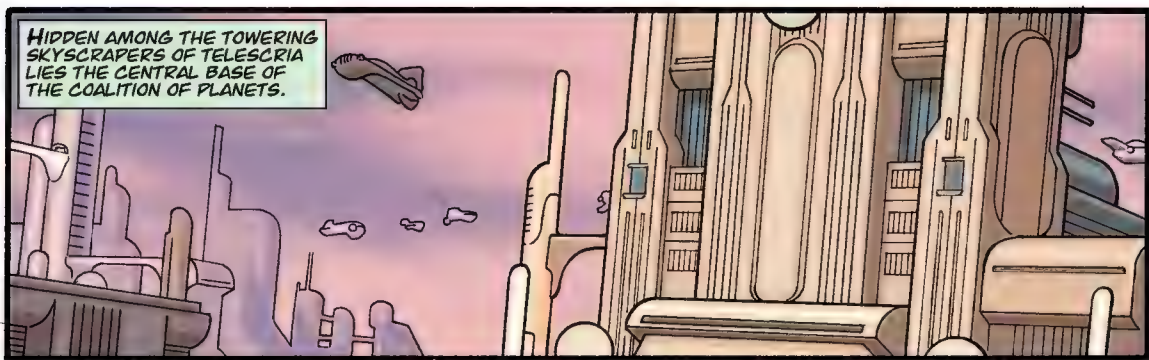
CROSS  
ME--AND IT  
WILL BE  
YOUR END.

OOH  
SCARY.

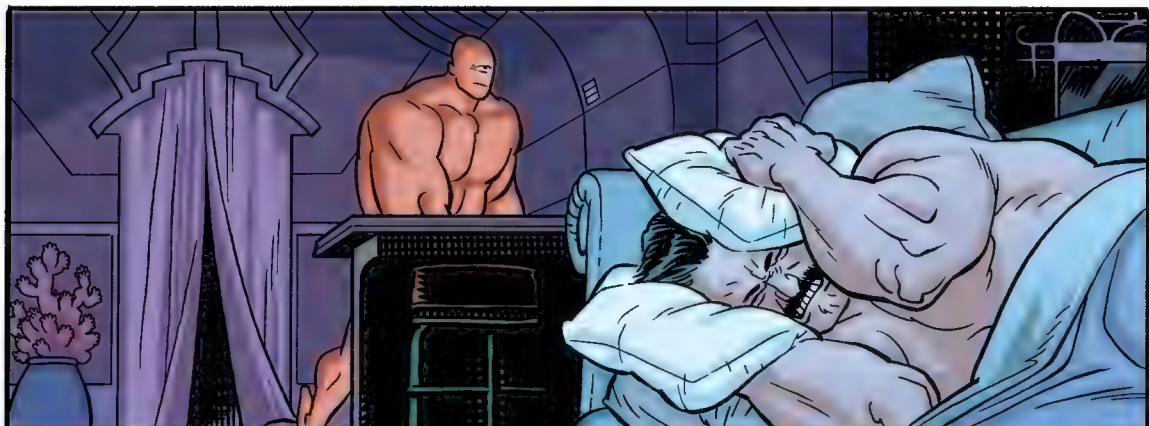
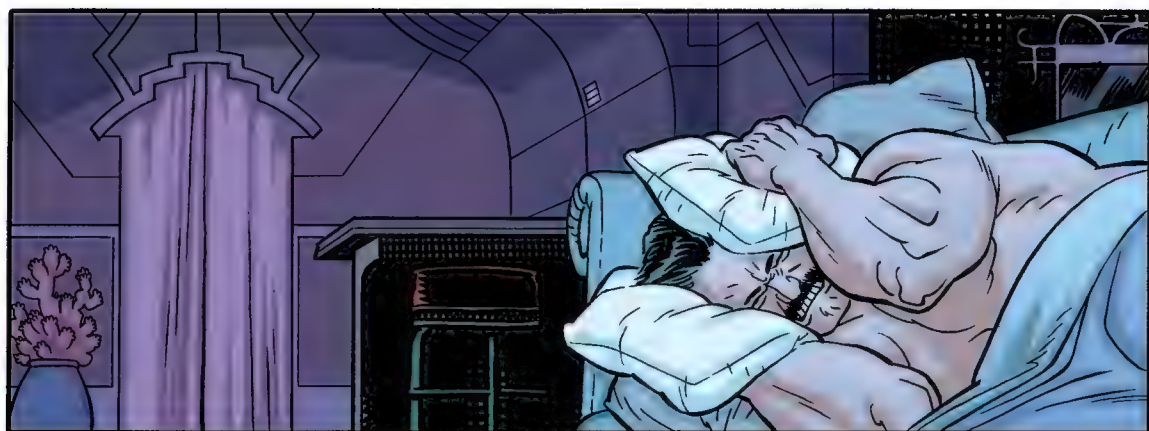
HEH.



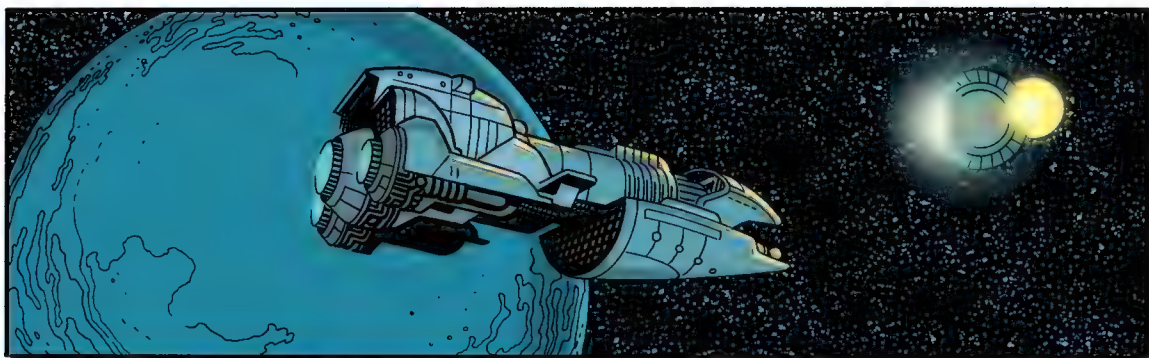












THE ROGNARR ARE VICIOUS. WE NEED TO BE CAREFUL. WHEN THE VILTRUMITES DISCOVERED THIS RACE OF MONSTERS, THEY SENT A FEW TEAMS HERE TO TRY AND DESTROY THEM-- TO DISASTROUS RESULTS. THESE THINGS ARE INDESTRUCTIBLE.

FINALLY, I CAME UP WITH THE IDEA OF USING A SOLAR DISK TO BLOCK THEIR SUN-- FREEZING THEM. IF THESE THINGS THAW OUT WHILE WE'RE HERE-- WE'RE IN TROUBLE.

WITH ALL THIS ICE-- HOW ARE WE GOING TO FIND THEM?



YOU'RE RIGHT.

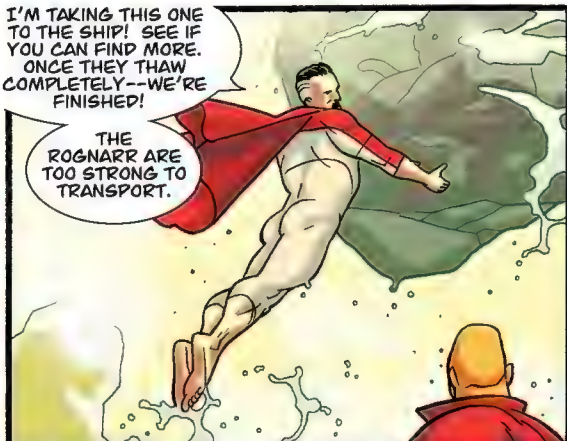
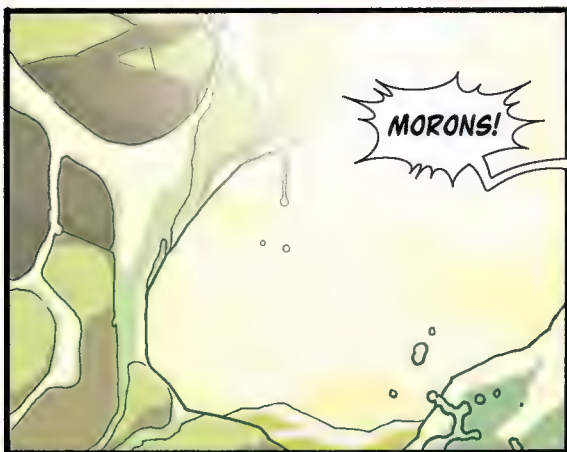
NOLAN TO BRIDGE. WE'RE GOING TO NEED TO PREPARE A TEAM TO TRANSPORT THESE THINGS TO THE CARGO HOLD BEFORE THEY COMPLETELY THAW OUT. THE ONLY WAY WE'RE GOING TO FIND THEM IS BY REMOVING THE SOLAR DISK.

WE CAN HANDLE THAT ON OUR OWN, THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

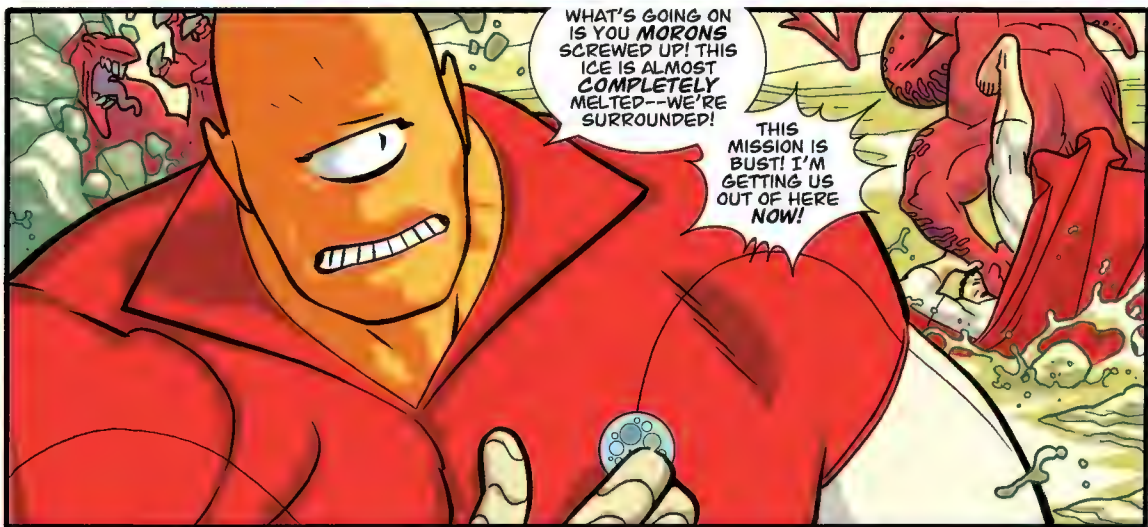
DOWNLOAD, FIRE AT WILL.



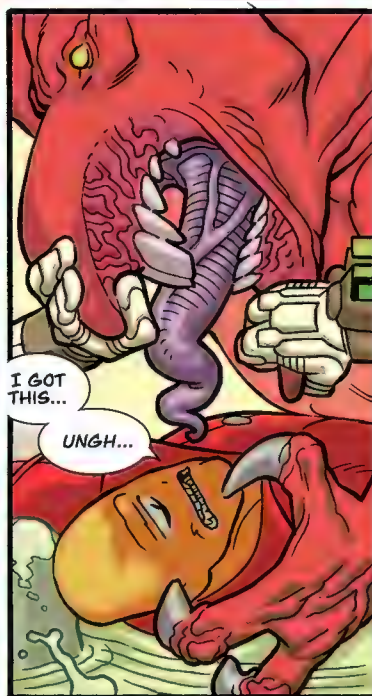
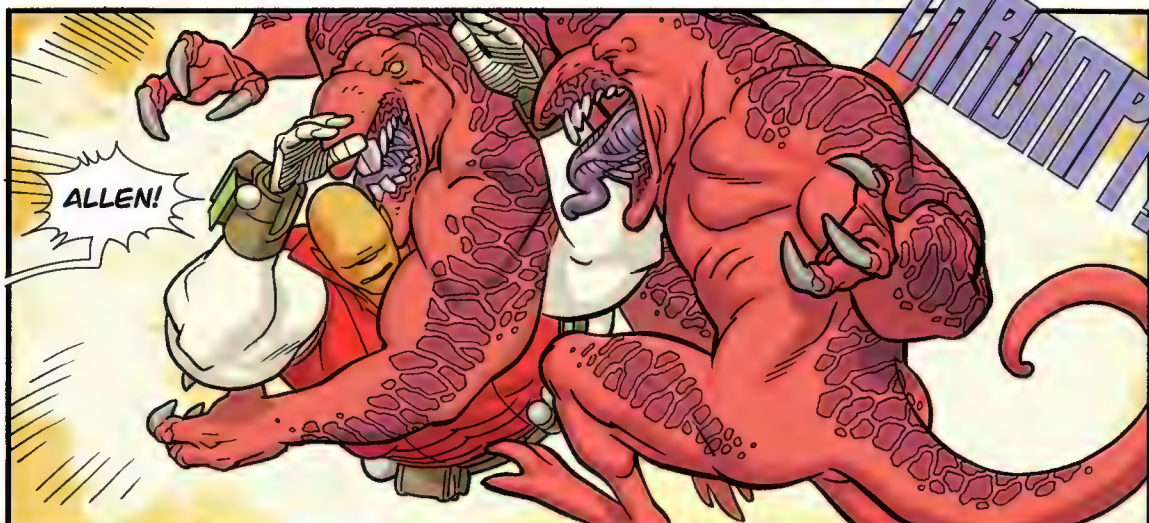




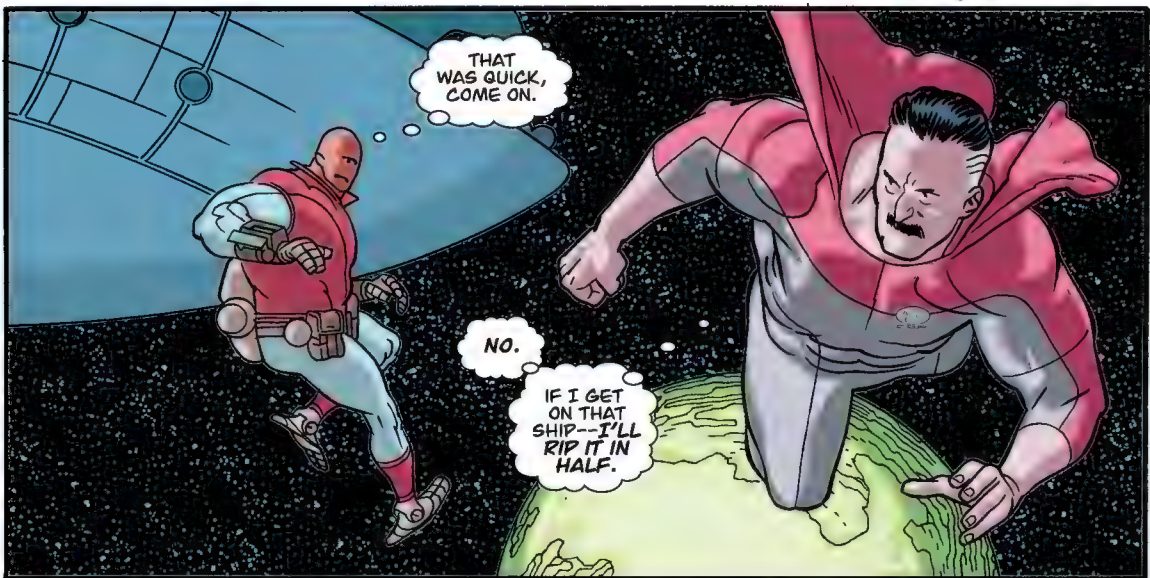
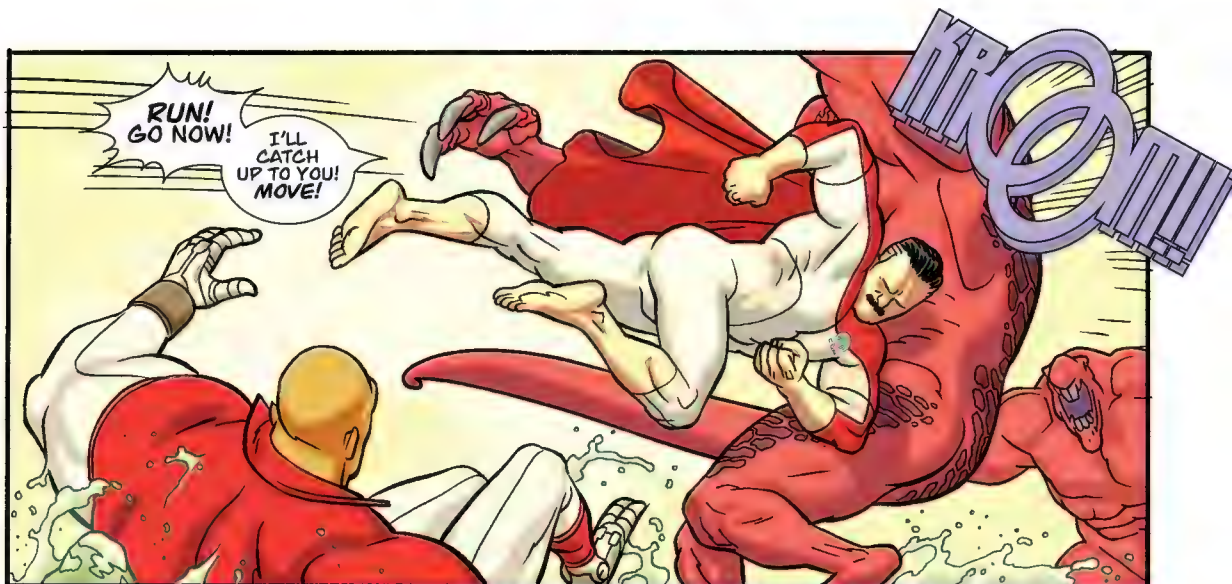




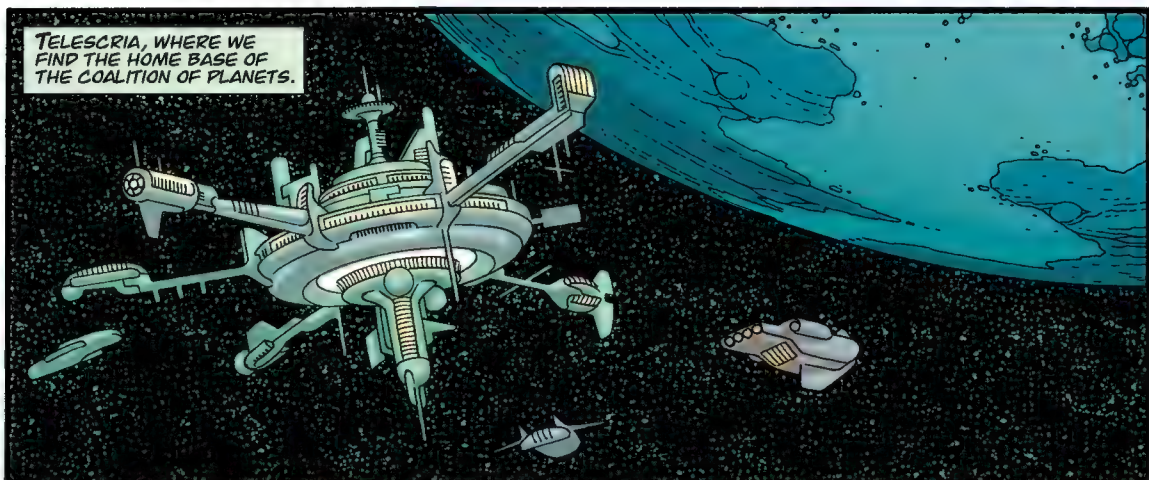












TELESCRIA, WHERE WE FIND THE HOME BASE OF THE COALITION OF PLANETS.



IT'S NOT A TOTAL LOSS. WE KNOW WHERE THEY ARE--AND THEY'RE ACTIVE AGAIN. WE COULD DISTRACT A SQUAD OF VILTRUMITES BY SENDING THEM THERE... AND I'M NOT COMPLETELY RULING OUT THE POSSIBILITY OF CAPTURING SOME TO TRAIN IN SOME WAY.

WE'LL FIGURE SOMETHING OUT.

WE'RE NOT GOING TO SUCCEED EVERY SINGLE TIME.

THE SAME SHORT-TEMPERED BLOOD RUNS THROUGH MY VEINS AS WELL, NOLAN. YOU SHOWED GREAT RESTRAINT OUT THERE.

I'M SORRY MY PEOPLE SCREWED THIS ONE UP.

BEST NOT TO BRING IT UP.

SERIOUSLY.

THANKFULLY, THERE ARE FAR MORE POTENTIAL WEAPONS LISTED IN YOUR BOOKS... AND A FEW THINGS I'D LIKE YOU TO LOOK INTO THAT YOU DIDN'T WRITE ABOUT.

YOU HAVE A LONG ROAD AHEAD OF YOU.



THE KLAXUS PLANT IS **POISONOUS** TO VILTRUMITES. IT CAN'T KILL US--BUT IT WOULD MAKE US PRETTY EASY TO DEFEAT IN AN OTHERWISE EVENLY MATCHED FIGHT.

THE PROBLEM IS THE PLANT IS **IMPOSSIBLE** TO KEEP FROM GROWING. IT NEEDS VERY LITTLE WATER OR SUNLIGHT AND GROWS AT AN INSANELY RAPID RATE.

SO... WE INFESTED THIS PLANET WITH THESE SINLAK BEETLES, WHICH EAT THE PLANT FASTER THAN IT CAN GROW--AND ARE IMPOSSIBLE TO EXTERMINATE.

MAYBE WE CAN EXTRACT SOME OF THE POISON FROM PLANT MATERIAL INGESTED BY THE BEETLE...

IT IS TRUE, WE WERE ABLE TO FEND OFF THE VILTRUMITE SPONSORED KRESH INVASION OF GELDARIA.

THERE IS ONE THAT MAY BE OF ASSISTANCE TO YOU.\*

THEIR OLD MIGRATION PATHS CAME RIGHT THROUGH THIS SPOT ON THE STARMAPS.

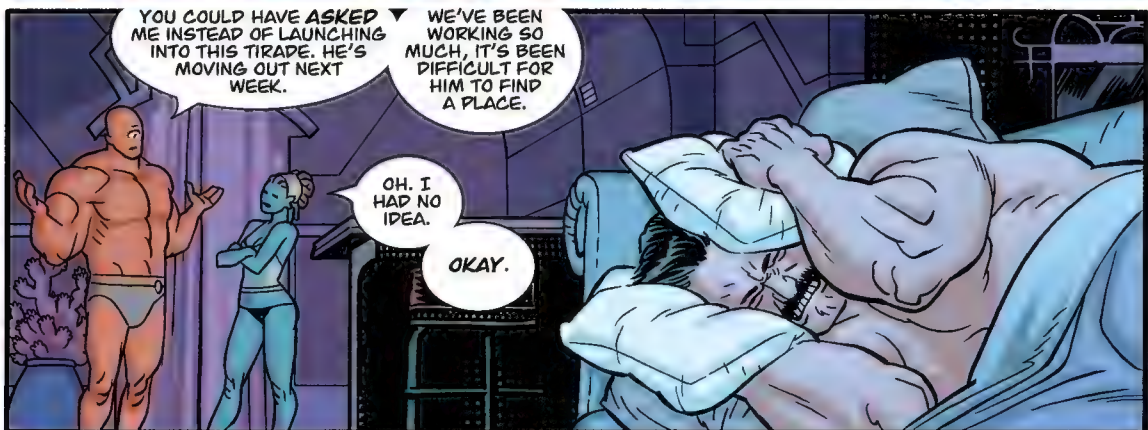
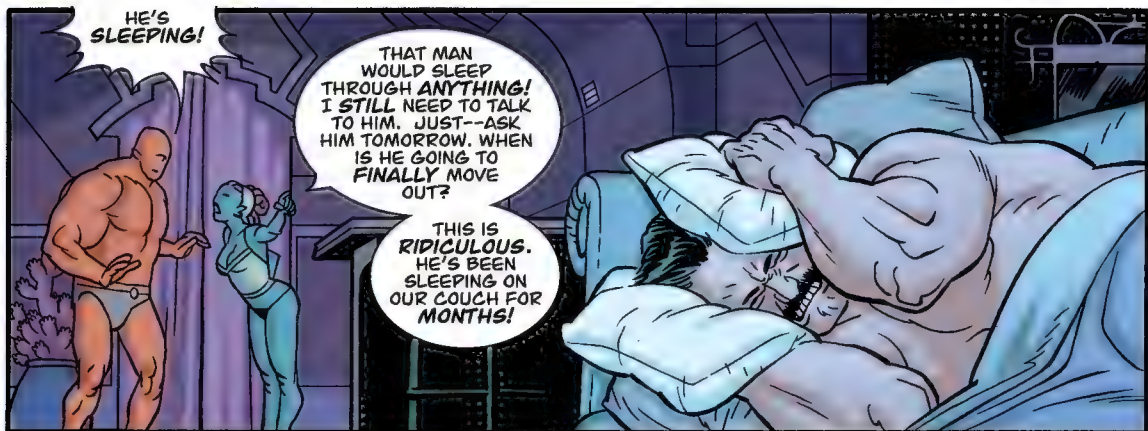
IF WE COULD CATCH ONE OF THESE IT WOULD BE A HUGE HELP. **SPACE SHARKS** ARE BAD NEWS.

\*HOLY CRAP! HE'S TALKING ABOUT TECH JACKET! YOU SHOULD TOTALLY ORDER THAT TRADE PAPERBACK, DUDE.

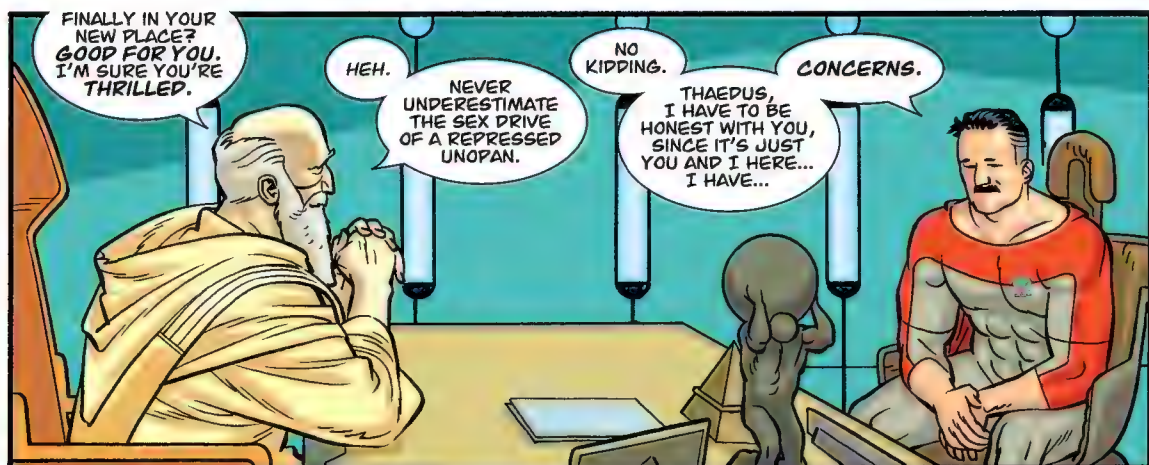












FINALLY IN YOUR  
NEW PLACE?  
GOOD FOR YOU.  
I'M SURE YOU'RE  
THRILLED.

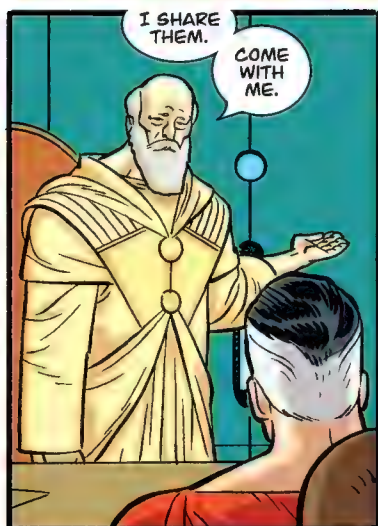
HEH.

NEVER  
UNDERESTIMATE  
THE SEX DRIVE  
OF A REPRESSED  
UNOPAN.

NO  
KIDDING.

THAEDUS,  
I HAVE TO BE  
HONEST WITH YOU,  
SINCE IT'S JUST  
YOU AND I HERE...  
I HAVE...

CONCERNS.



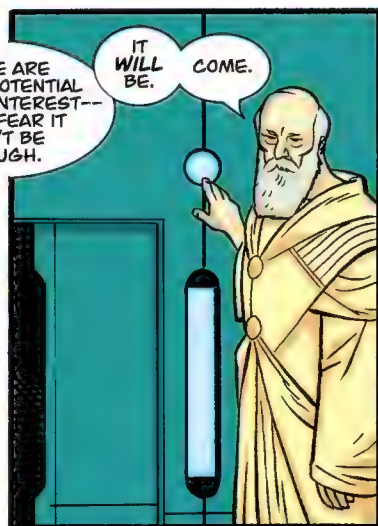
I SHARE  
THEM.

COME  
WITH  
ME.



WE HAVE SPACE RACER  
WORKING WITH US. WE  
WERE ABLE TO EXTRACT  
A DILUTED SAMPLE OF  
THE KLAXUS POISON  
FROM THE SINTAK  
BEETLE.

THERE ARE  
OTHER POTENTIAL  
ITEMS OF INTEREST--  
BUT I FEAR IT  
WON'T BE  
ENOUGH.



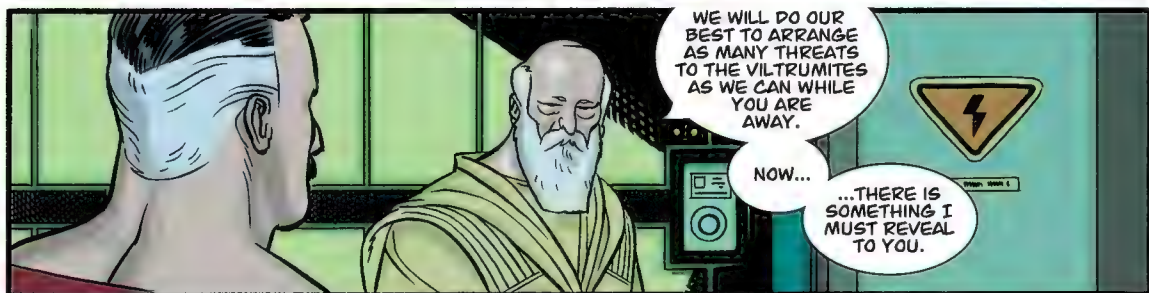
IT  
WILL  
BE.

COME.



THE TIME  
TO STRIKE IS  
NOW. YOU  
NEED TO GO  
TO EARTH.

GET YOUR  
SON AND THAT  
BOY WITH THE  
GELDARIAN WEAPON--  
AND WHOEVER ELSE  
YOU THINK CAN  
HELP US.



WE WILL DO OUR  
BEST TO ARRANGE  
AS MANY THREATS  
TO THE VILTRUMITES  
AS WE CAN WHILE  
YOU ARE  
AWAY.

NOW...

...THERE IS  
SOMETHING I  
MUST REVEAL  
TO YOU.



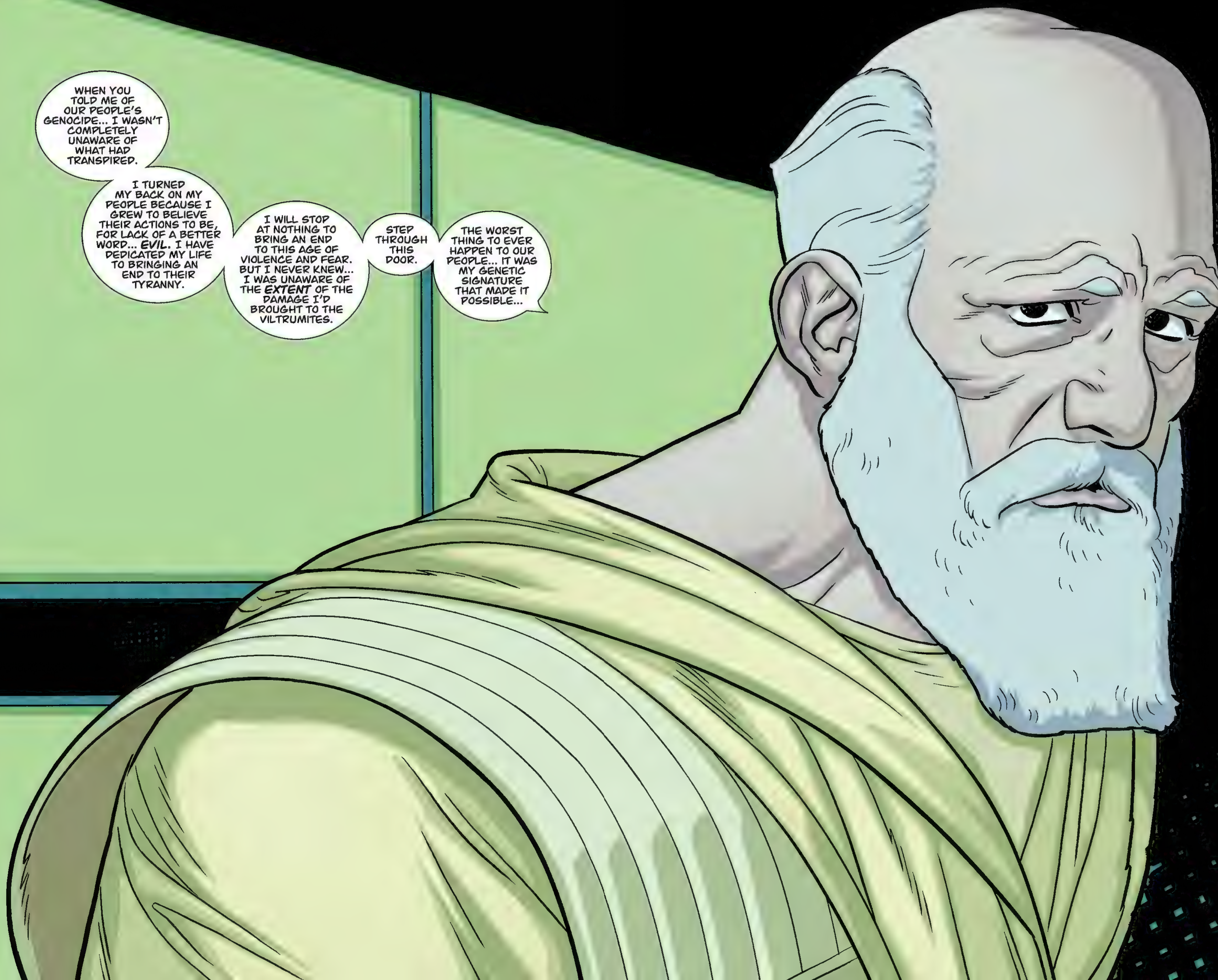
WHEN YOU  
TOLD ME OF  
OUR PEOPLE'S  
GENOCIDE... I WASN'T  
COMPLETELY  
UNAWARE OF  
WHAT HAD  
TRANSPIRED.

I TURNED  
MY BACK ON MY  
PEOPLE BECAUSE I  
GREW TO BELIEVE  
THEIR ACTIONS TO BE,  
FOR LACK OF A BETTER  
WORD... EVIL. I HAVE  
DEDICATED MY LIFE  
TO BRINGING AN  
END TO THEIR  
TYRANNY.

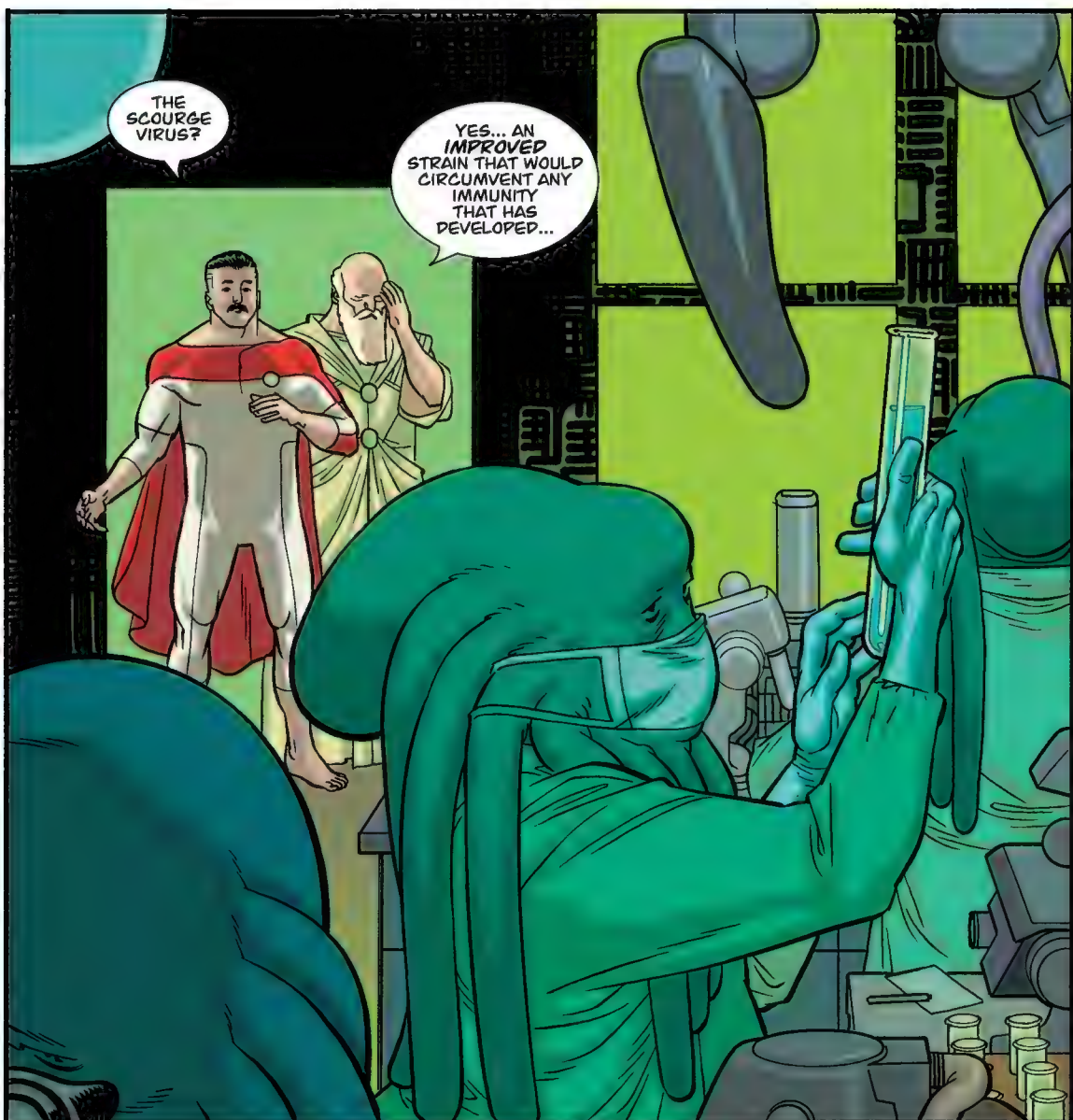
I WILL STOP  
AT NOTHING TO  
BRING AN END  
TO THIS AGE OF  
VIOLENCE AND FEAR.  
BUT I NEVER KNEW...  
I WAS UNAWARE OF  
THE EXTENT OF THE  
DAMAGE I'D  
BROUGHT TO THE  
VILTRUMITES.

STEP  
THROUGH  
THIS  
DOOR.

THE WORST  
THING TO EVER  
HAPPEN TO OUR  
PEOPLE... IT WAS  
MY GENETIC  
SIGNATURE  
THAT MADE IT  
POSSIBLE...













# CHAPTER 68



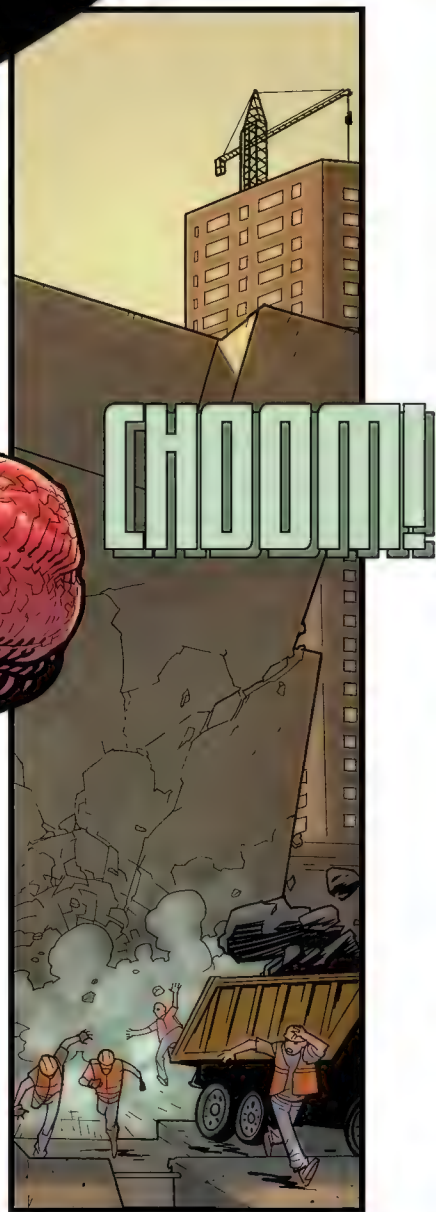




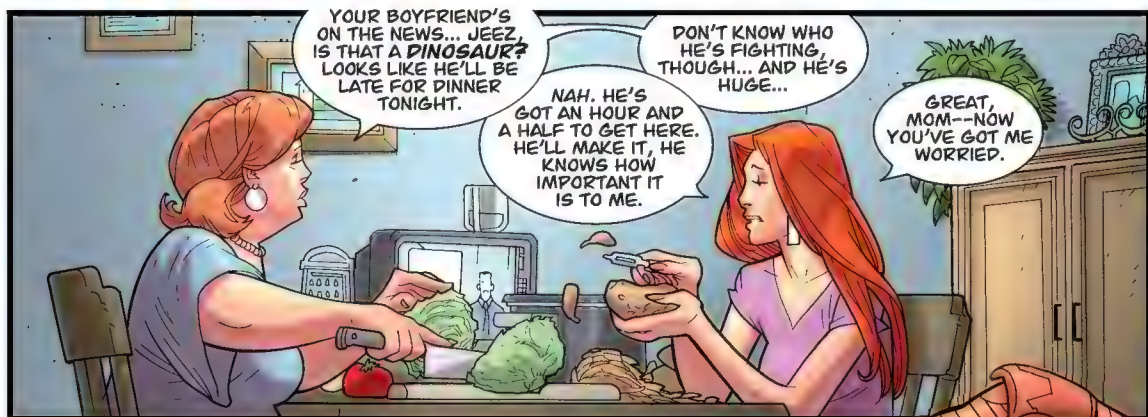
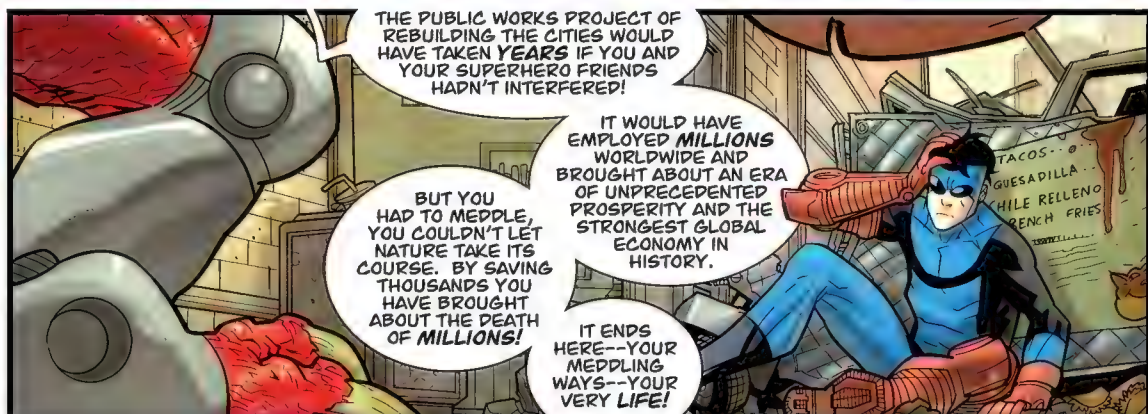
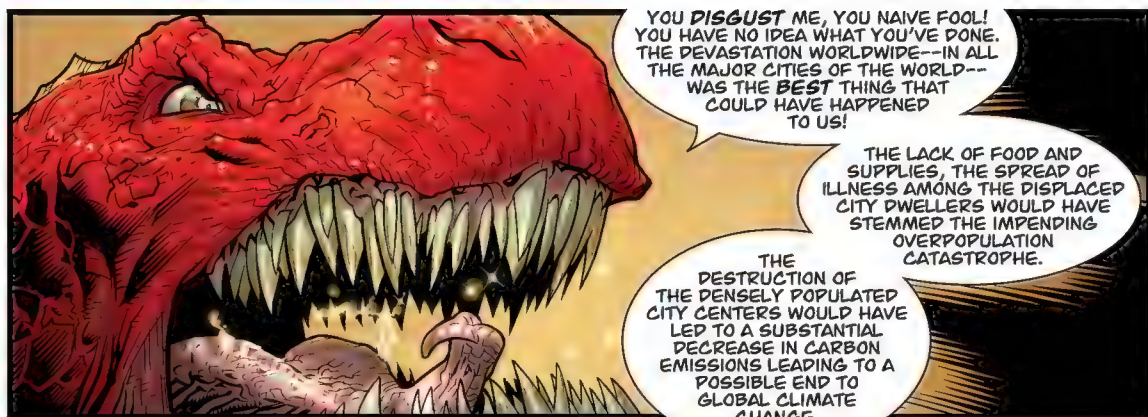
UNGH.

ALMOST  
THERE.

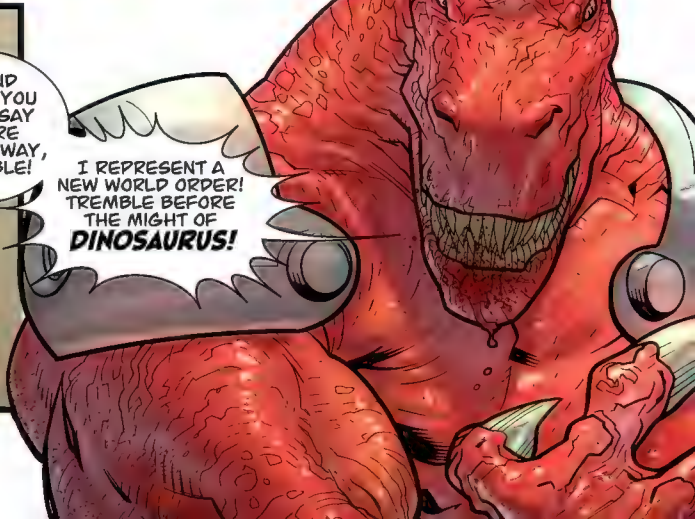




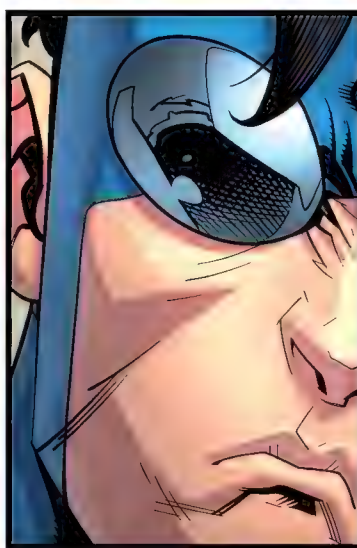
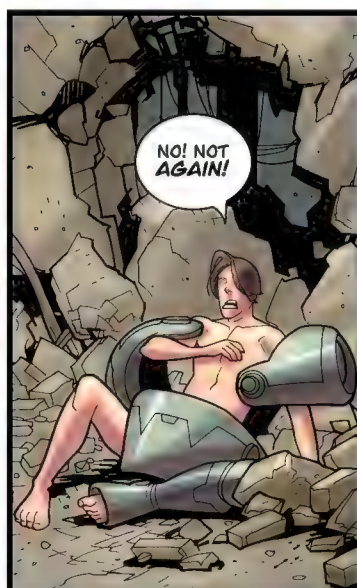




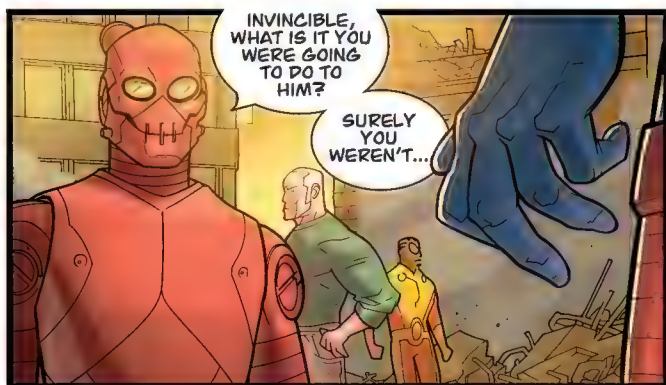




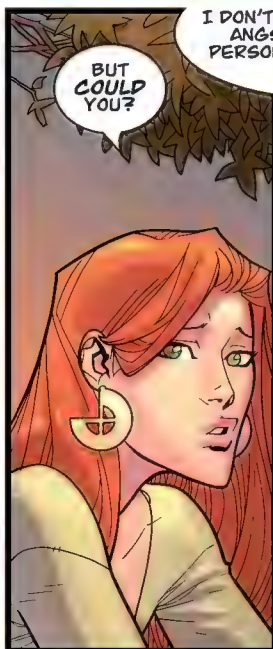
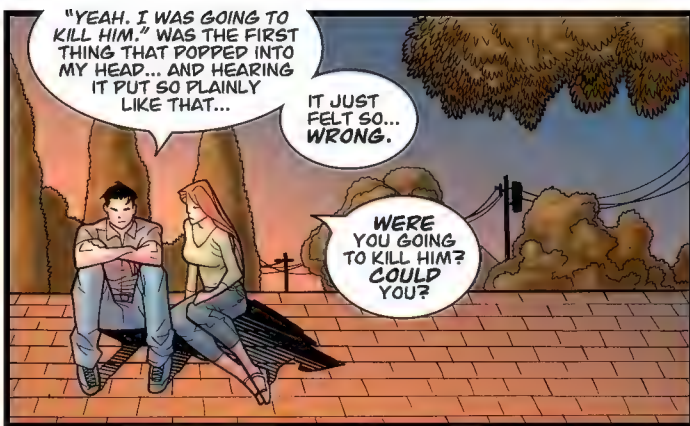
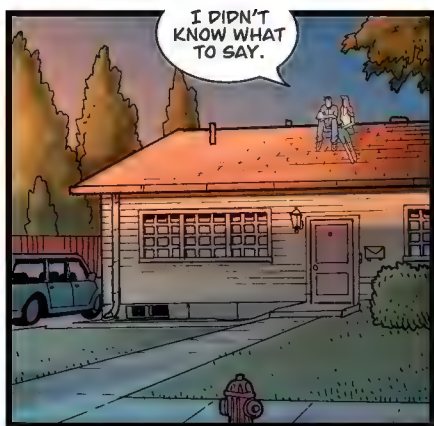




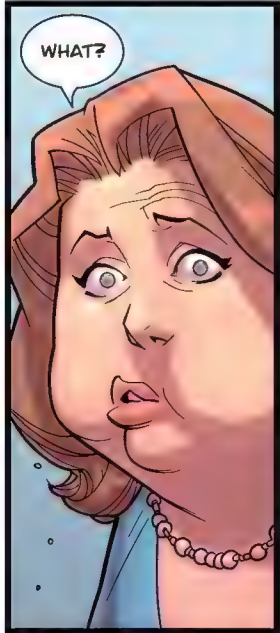
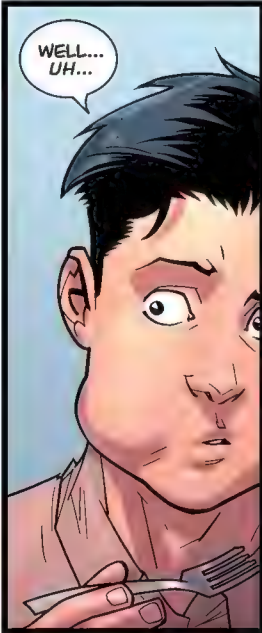
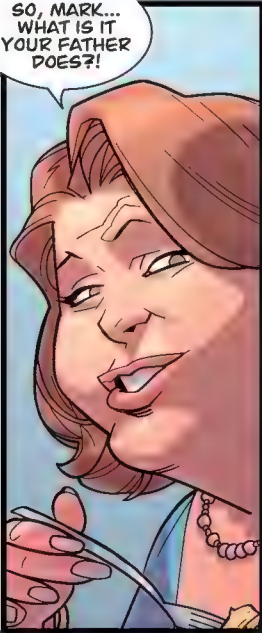
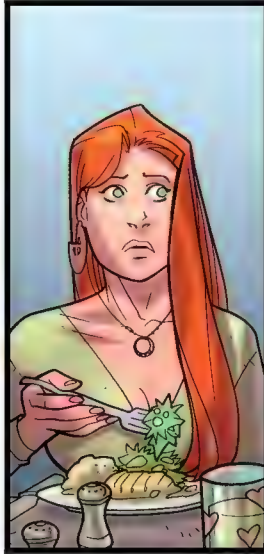
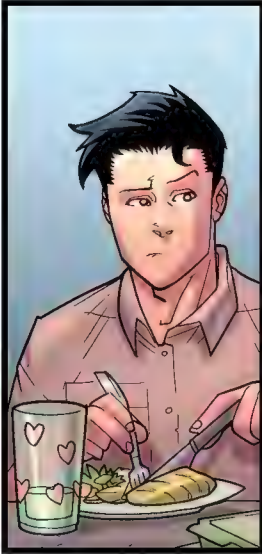
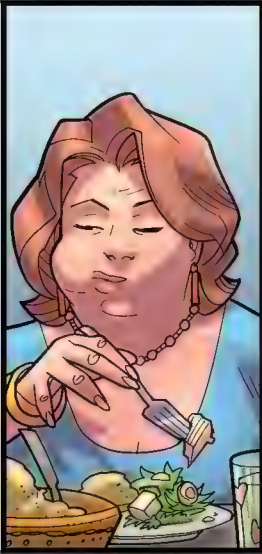
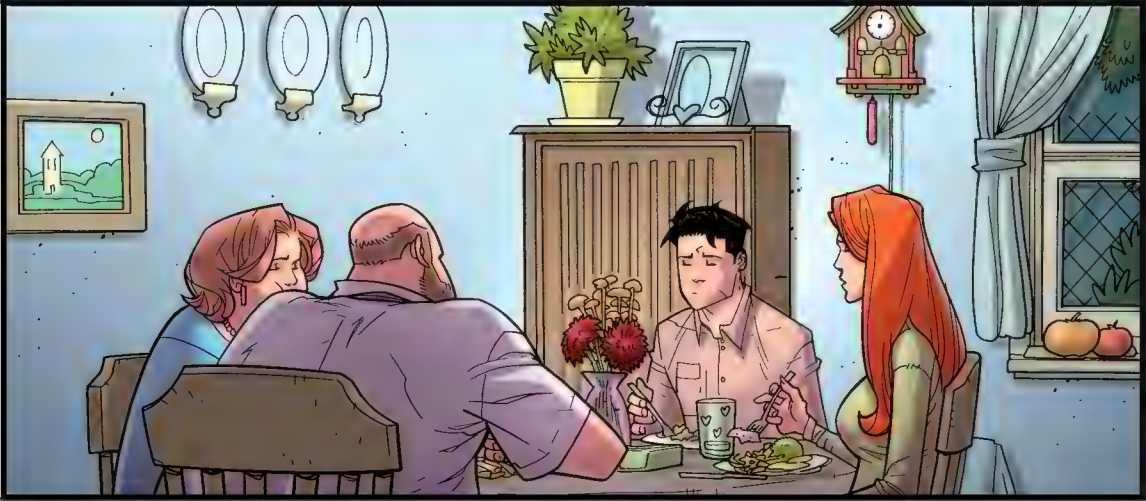




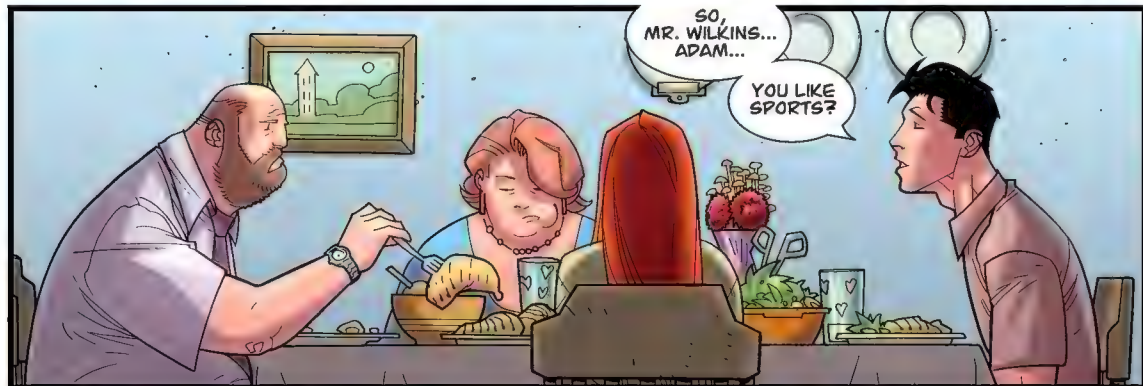
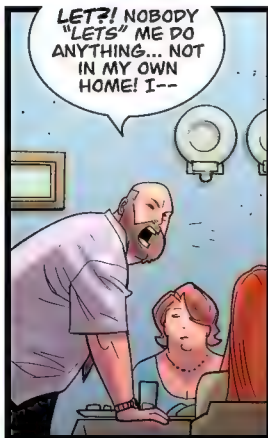




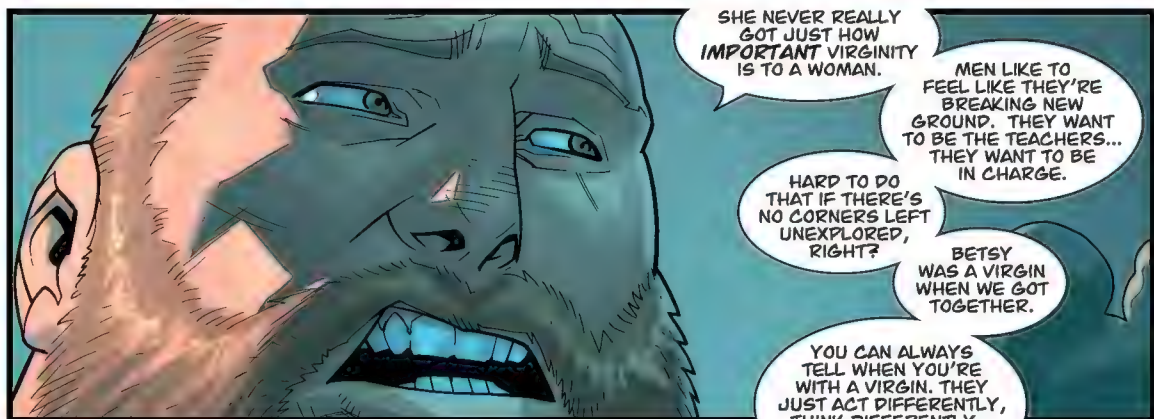




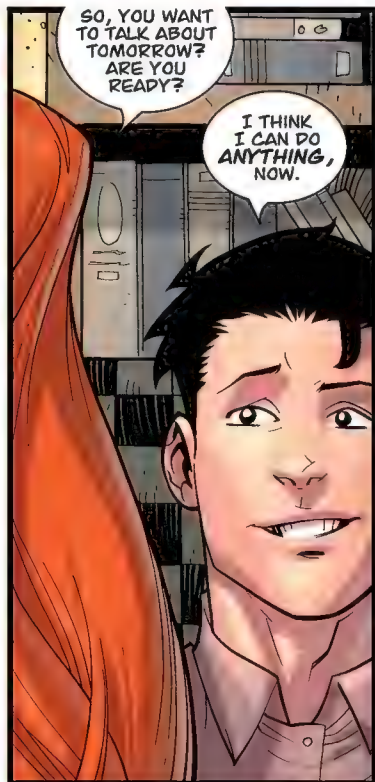
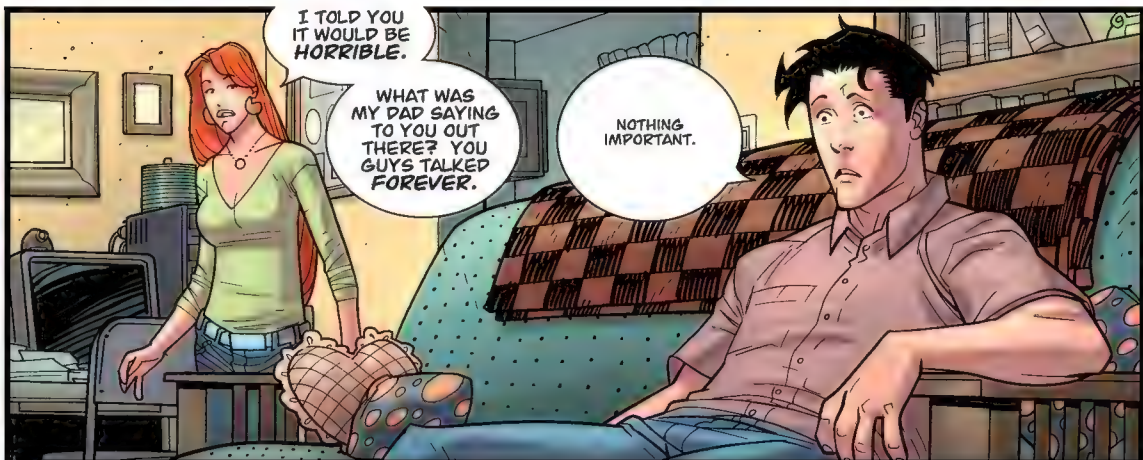
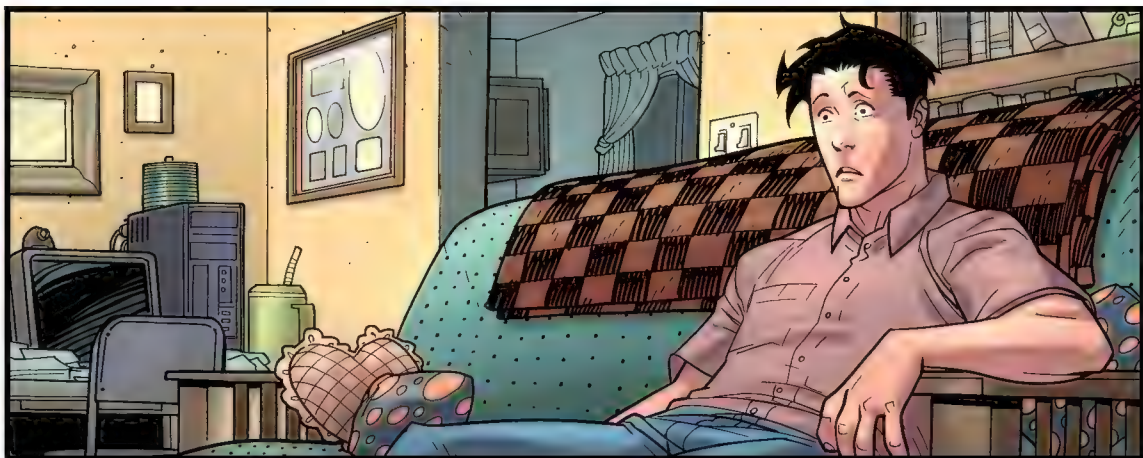




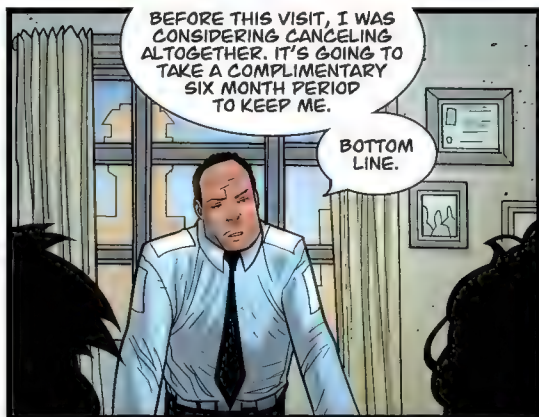
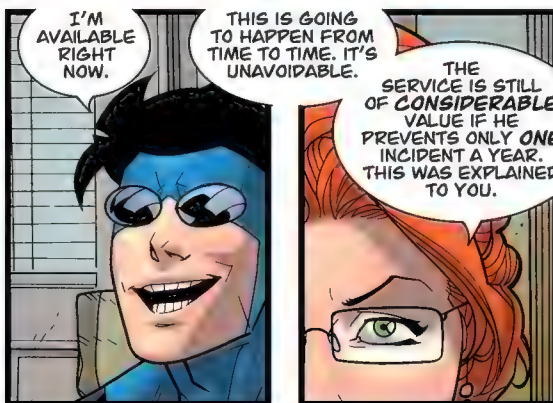
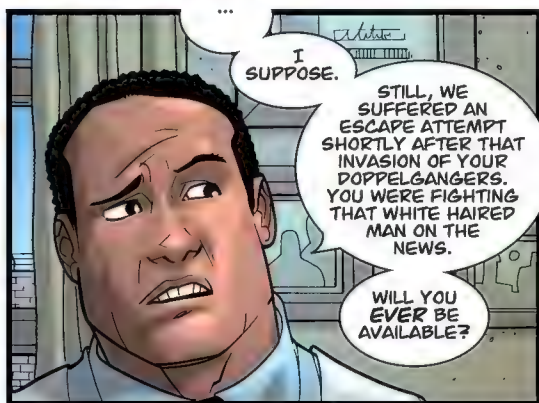
















OH, WOW!  
THAT WAS  
**AWESOME!** YOU  
WERE **AMAZING**  
IN THERE!

**SOMEONE**  
HAD TO BE. LORD,  
MARK--YOU'RE  
SUCH A PUSH OVER.  
YOU GIVE HIM SIX  
FREE MONTHS AND  
WE'LL **NEVER**  
HAVE OUR OWN  
PLACE!



SORRY.

YOU OKAY  
TO FLY? I  
MEAN, YOUR  
POWERS--?



I WOULDN'T  
BE FLYING SO  
HIGH IF YOU  
WEREN'T RIGHT  
HERE. I DON'T  
KNOW--THEY  
HAVEN'T ACTED  
UP IN A FEW  
DAYS... MAYBE  
THAT'S  
OVER.

ONE  
CAN ONLY  
HOPE...



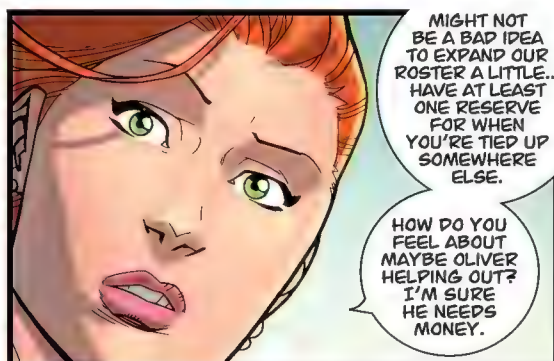
SORRY I  
BROUGHT IT  
UP. DIDN'T  
MEAN TO  
UPSET  
YOU.

IT'S  
OKAY.

THE GOOD  
NEWS IS THAT  
I'VE GOTTEN SOME  
CALLS FROM A FEW  
POWER PLANTS  
INQUIRING ABOUT  
OUR SERVICE.  
THIS COULD BE  
**HUGE.**

DO YOU  
REALIZE HOW  
MUCH WE'LL BE  
MAKING IF WE  
GET SO MUCH AS  
SIX REGULAR  
CLIENTS?

NOPE...  
BUT AS LONG  
AS YOU KNOW,  
I'M COOL.



MIGHT NOT  
BE A BAD IDEA  
TO EXPAND OUR  
ROSTER A LITTLE...  
HAVE AT LEAST  
ONE RESERVE  
FOR WHEN  
YOU'RE TIED UP  
SOMEWHERE  
ELSE.

HOW DO YOU  
FEEL ABOUT  
MAYBE OLIVER  
HELPING OUT?  
I'M SURE  
HE NEEDS  
MONEY.



SPEAK  
OF THE  
DEVIL...





HEY GUYS--  
YOU HEADED  
BACK TO THE  
HOUSE?

MOM'S OUT  
WITH PAUL  
TONIGHT. FIGURED  
YOU MIGHT... WELL...  
WANT TO KNOW  
YOU HAVE THE  
HOUSE ALL TO  
YOURSELF.

Y'KNOW...  
SEX.



CUTE.

WHOA,  
MAN--NICE  
COSTUME. I  
LIKE IT. WHAT  
BROUGHT  
THAT ON?



I JUST WENT A  
FEW ROUNDS WITH  
THE ELEPHANT.  
HE RIPPED MY  
COSTUME  
UP.

YOU  
FOUGHT  
HIM BEFORE,  
RIGHT?



SEEMS LIKE I HAVE...  
I DON'T REALLY  
REMEMBER. MAYBE  
ONCE.



WELL, ANYWAY, MY  
COSTUME GOT ALL  
RIPPED UP. I WENT  
TO ART FOR A FIX AND  
HE SAID "YOU'RE  
GETTING A LITTLE  
OLD FOR THE  
EXPOSED LEG  
BIT."

I  
AGREED--  
AND THEN  
PRESTO  
CHANGO--



--YOUNG  
OMNI-MAN  
IS BORN!



WELL, I'M GOING  
BACK OUT ON  
PATROL--YOU GUYS  
HAVE FUN BACK AT  
THE HOUSE.

WINK.

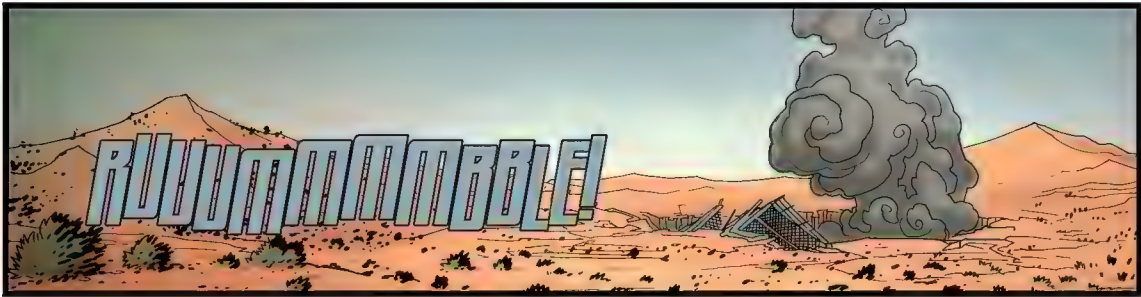
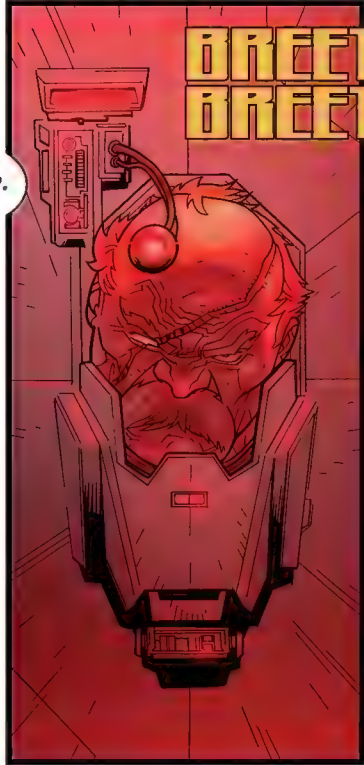
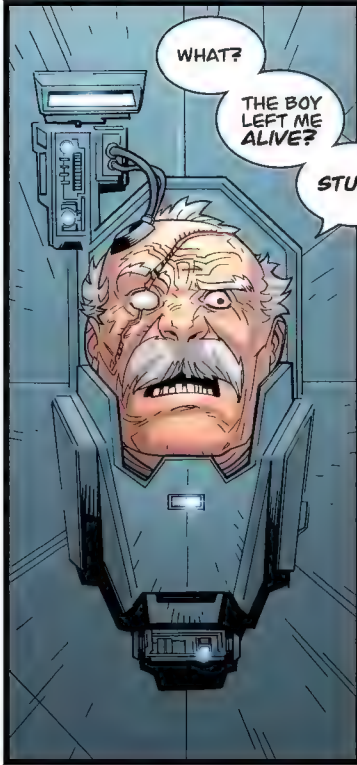
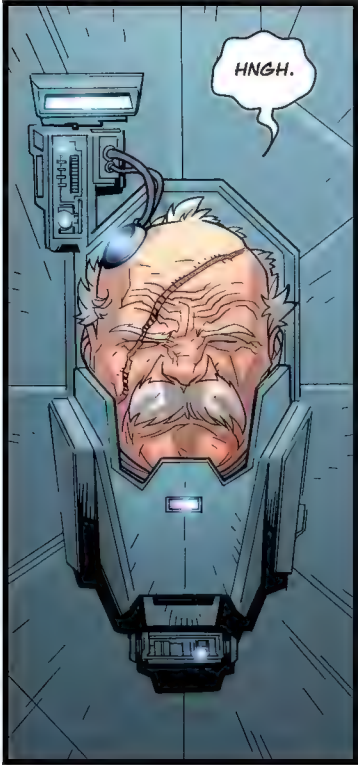

RUDE.

EH... HE'S  
NOT WRONG,  
THOUGH.

HOUSE  
ALL TO  
OURSELVES--  
WEE!



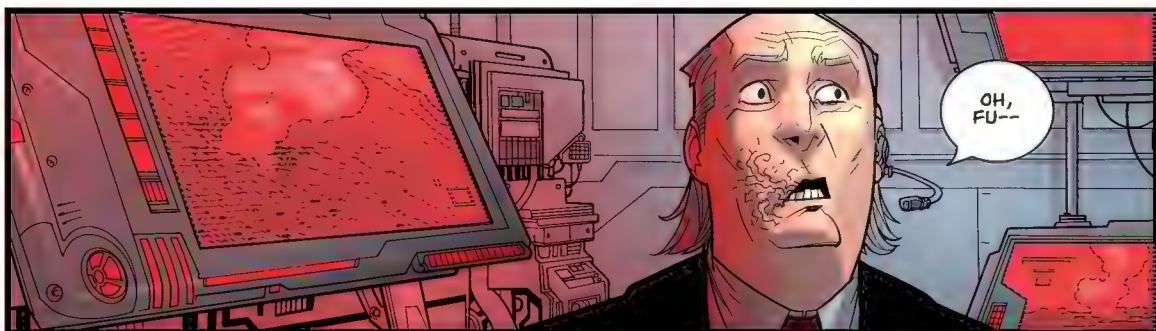
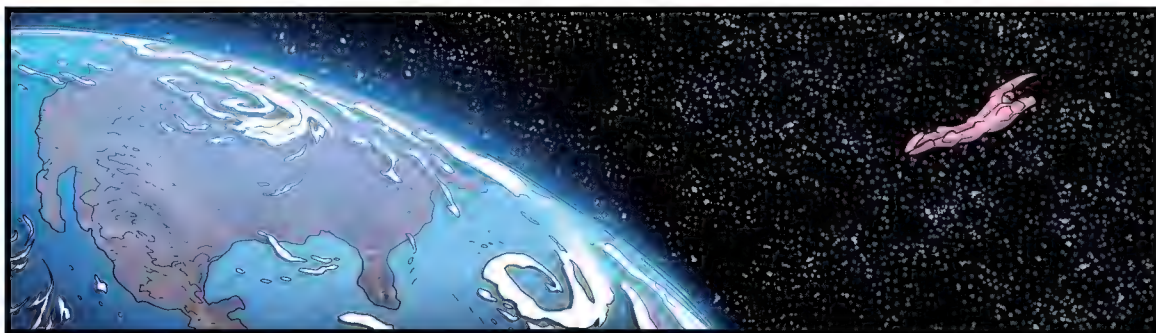
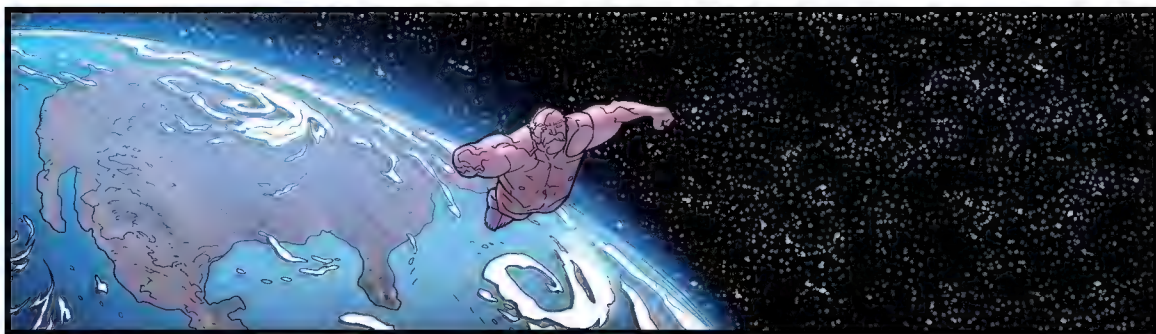
**THE BLOCK. REMOTE GLOBAL DEFENSE AGENCY OUTPOST IN THE MOJAVE DESERT.**



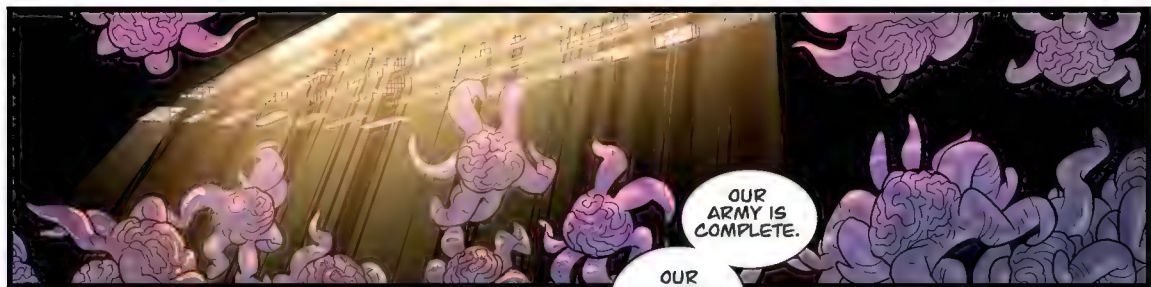












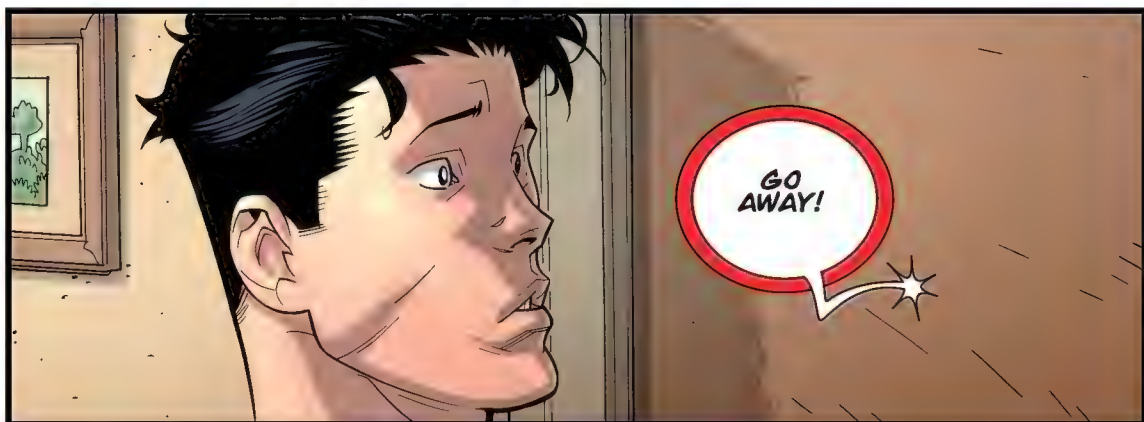
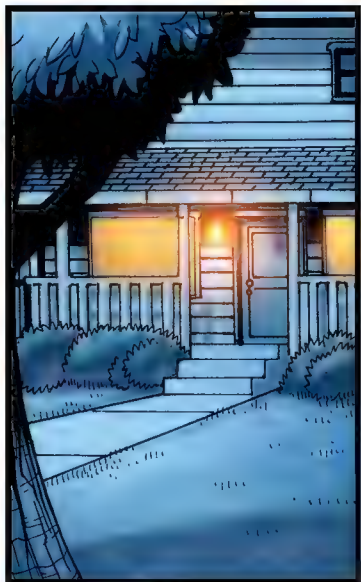
OUR  
ARMY IS  
COMPLETE.

OUR  
GENERALS  
ARE IN  
PLACE.

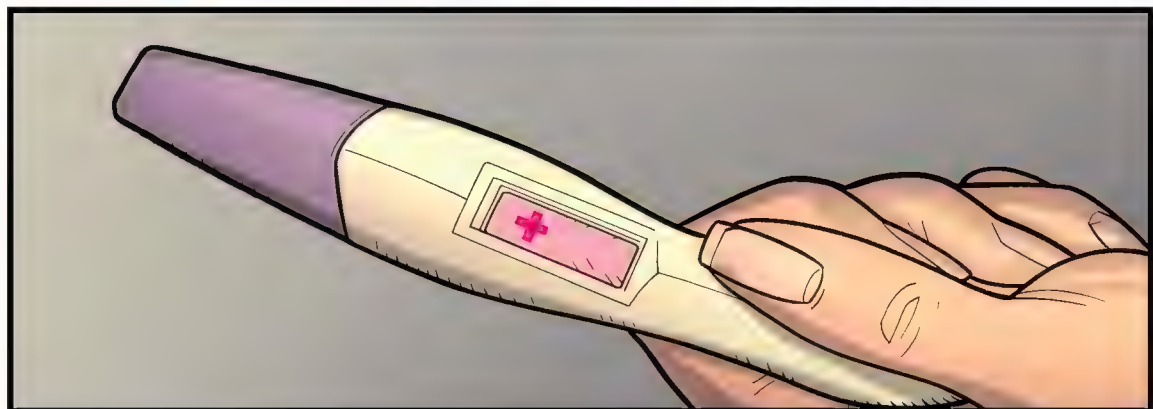


THE SEQUID  
INVASION OF  
EARTH BEGINS  
***NOW!***















# CHAPTER 69



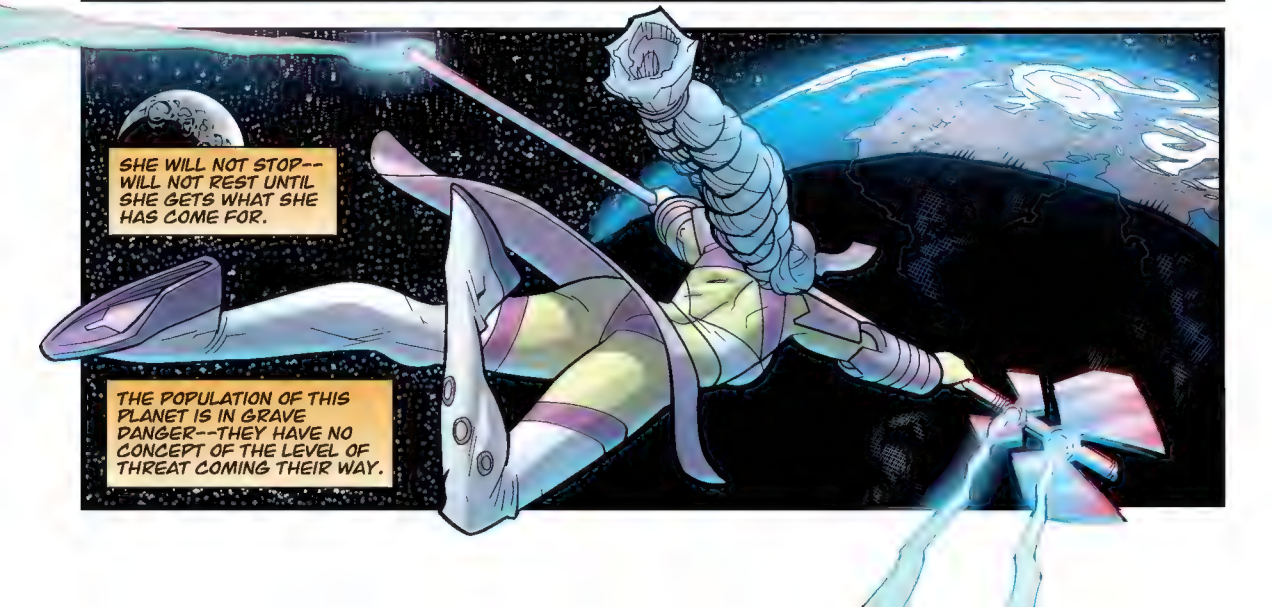




**SHE IS UNIVERSA,  
WARRIOR QUEEN TO  
A FAR OFF WORLD.**

**SHE HAS TRAVELED COUNTLESS  
MILES TO THE PLANET EARTH.  
HER REASONS FOR DOING SO  
WILL PUT THE ENTIRE PLANET  
IN JEOPARDY.**

**SHE IS AS DEADLY AS  
SHE IS RELENTLESS.**



**SHE WILL NOT STOP--  
WILL NOT REST UNTIL  
SHE GETS WHAT SHE  
HAS COME FOR.**

**THE POPULATION OF THIS  
PLANET IS IN GRAVE  
DANGER--THEY HAVE NO  
CONCEPT OF THE LEVEL OF  
THREAT COMING THEIR WAY.**



BECAUSE THE PEOPLE OF EARTH HAVE FAR MORE PRESSING CONCERNS AT THE MOMENT.

KR000M!

WR00M!

HEAR ME, HUMAN RACE!  
IT IS TIME TO MEET YOUR NEW MASTERS!

TOGETHER WE WILL FORM A NEW RACE--A NEW CIVILIZATION. WE WILL LIVE TOGETHER AS ONE--A NEW COMBINED RACE OF HUMAN AND SEQUID!

EMBRACE US OR DIE!

THE PEOPLE OF EARTH DO NOT LIVE IN A CONSTANT STATE OF FEAR. WHILE THERE HAVE BEEN ALIEN INVASIONS, ENTIRE CITIES LEVELED AND VILLAINS WHO THREATEN ALL LIFE ON EARTH...

THESE ATTACKS ARE FEW AND FAR BETWEEN. THERE ARE DAYS, WEEKS, EVEN MONTHS OF PEACE.

AND EVEN ON DAYS WHEN THERE IS AN ATTACK OF SOME KIND, ON SOME LARGE SCALE, IT IS MOST OFTEN AN ISOLATED EVENT, AFFECTING ONE AREA, EASILY HANDLED BY ONE COSTUMED HERO.

IT IS A RARE OCCASION THAT TWO THREATS, OF SIMILAR MAGNITUDE, WOULD SOMEHOW OCCUR ON THE SAME DAY...

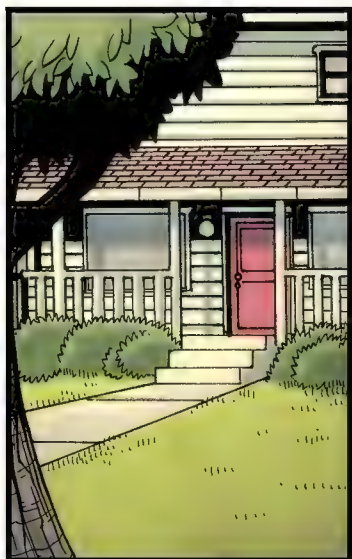


...BUT THIS IS ONE  
OF THOSE DAYS.



THERE.





ARE YOU OKAY? YOU'VE BEEN ACTING... DISTANT SINCE LAST NIGHT. I SWEAR MY MOM HAS NO CLUE YOU SPENT THE NIGHT.

SHE WAS OUT SUPER-LATE--PROBABLY STILL ASLEEP. IT'S COOL ANYWAY, I DOUBT SHE'D CARE.

EVE?

I'M OKAY.

I'M JUST TIRED... UM...

...AND WORRIED ABOUT MY POWERS.

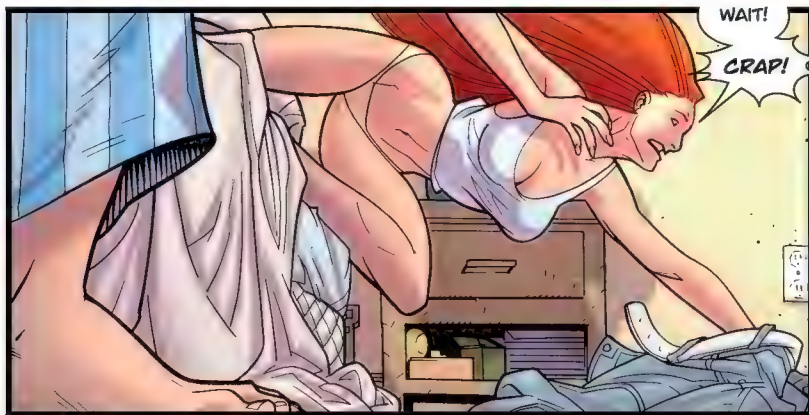
BUT YOU HAVEN'T HAD ANY MORE PROBLEMS WITH THEM, RIGHT? I THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE A ONE TIME THING.

DID SOMETHING ELSE--

BREET! BREET!

WHAT IS THAT?

I DON'T KNOW. WHERE IS IT COMING FROM?



WAIT!

CRAP!



CRAP!

CRAP!



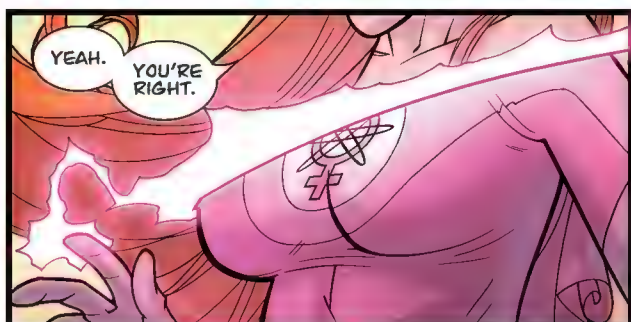
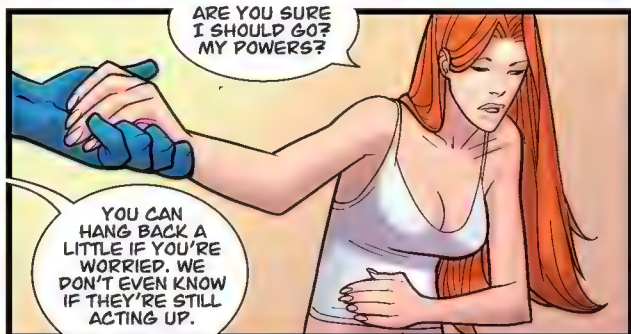
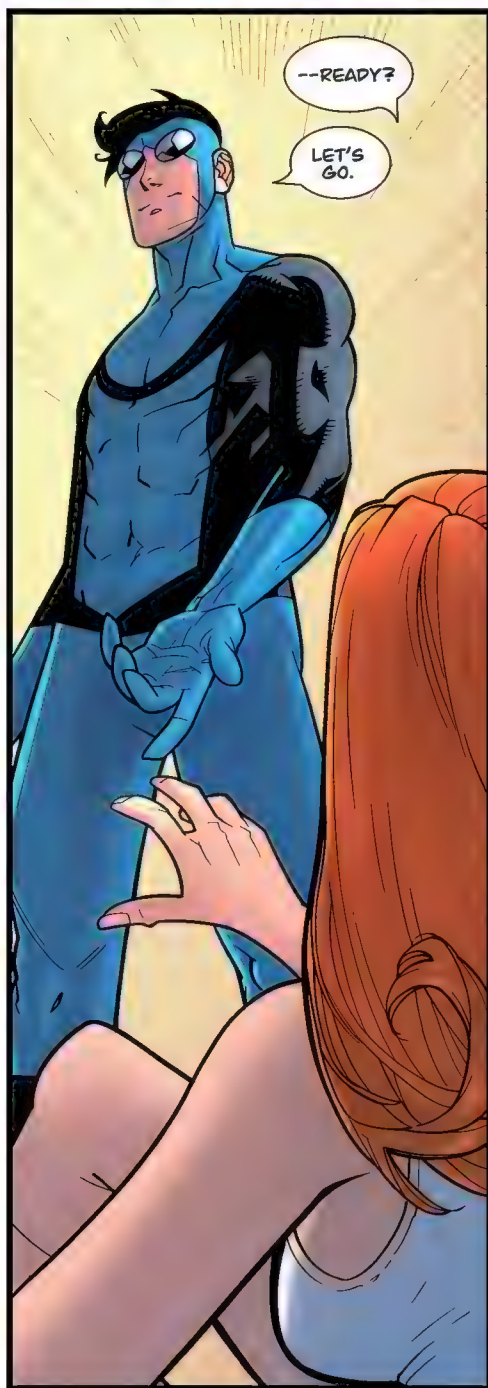
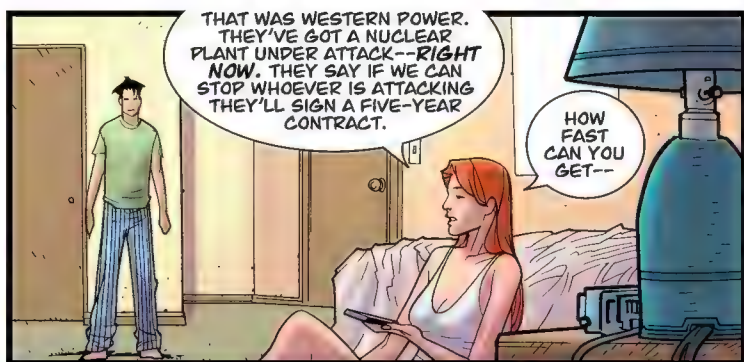
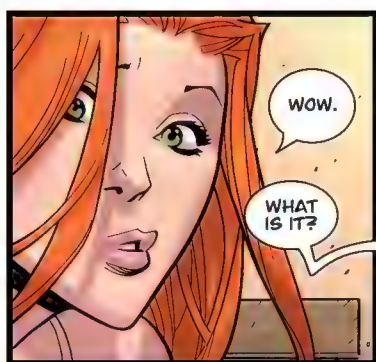
HI--INVINCIBLE INCORPORATED. HOW MAY I HELP YOU?

RIGHT NOW?

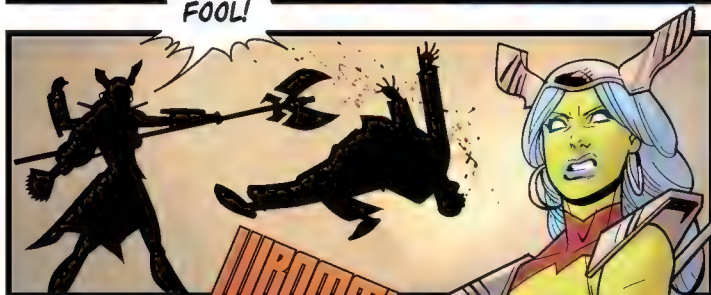
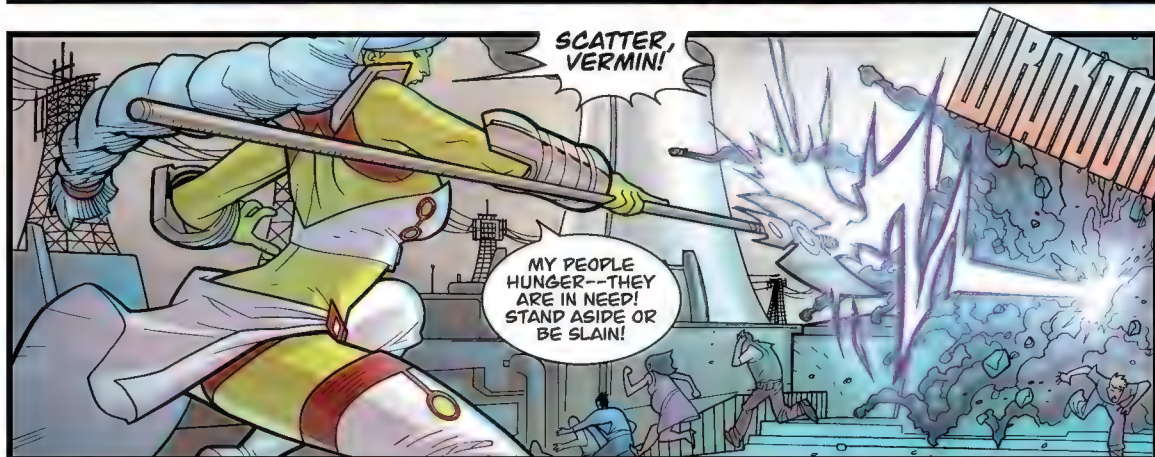
OKAY. NO, WE CAN HANDLE THAT.

WE'RE ON OUR WAY.









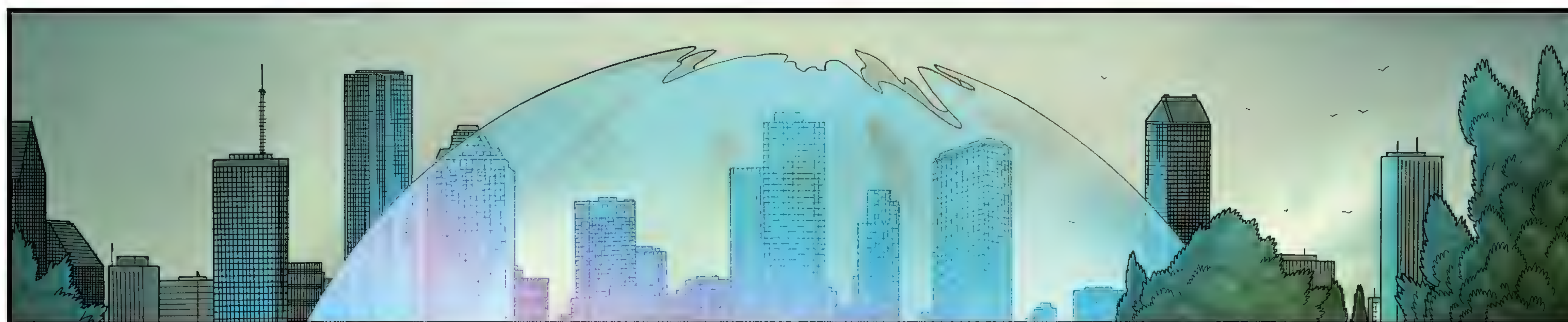
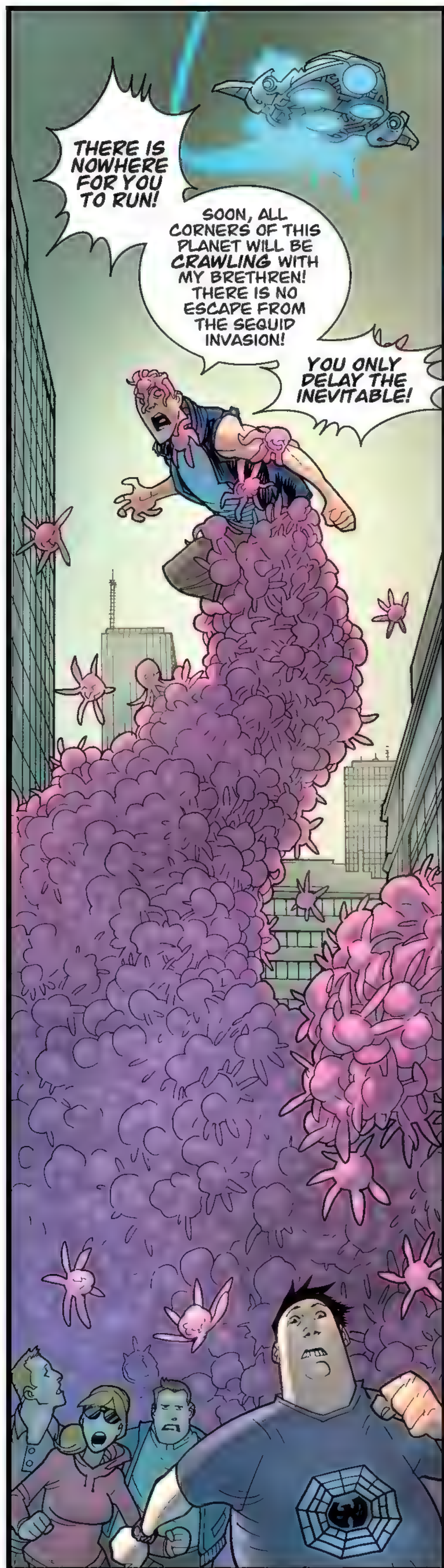
















WE HAVE  
TO WORK  
**FAST**,  
PEOPLE!

PRIORITY  
ONE IS REMOVING  
PEOPLE FROM THE  
CONTAINMENT ZONE.  
HIT THEM WITH THE  
DARTS AND THEY'RE  
TELEPORTED AWAY. THERE  
ARE **THOUSANDS** OF  
PEOPLE LEFT UNDER  
THIS DOME--WE DON'T  
GET THEM ALL--THE  
SEQUIDS REMAIN  
LINKED.

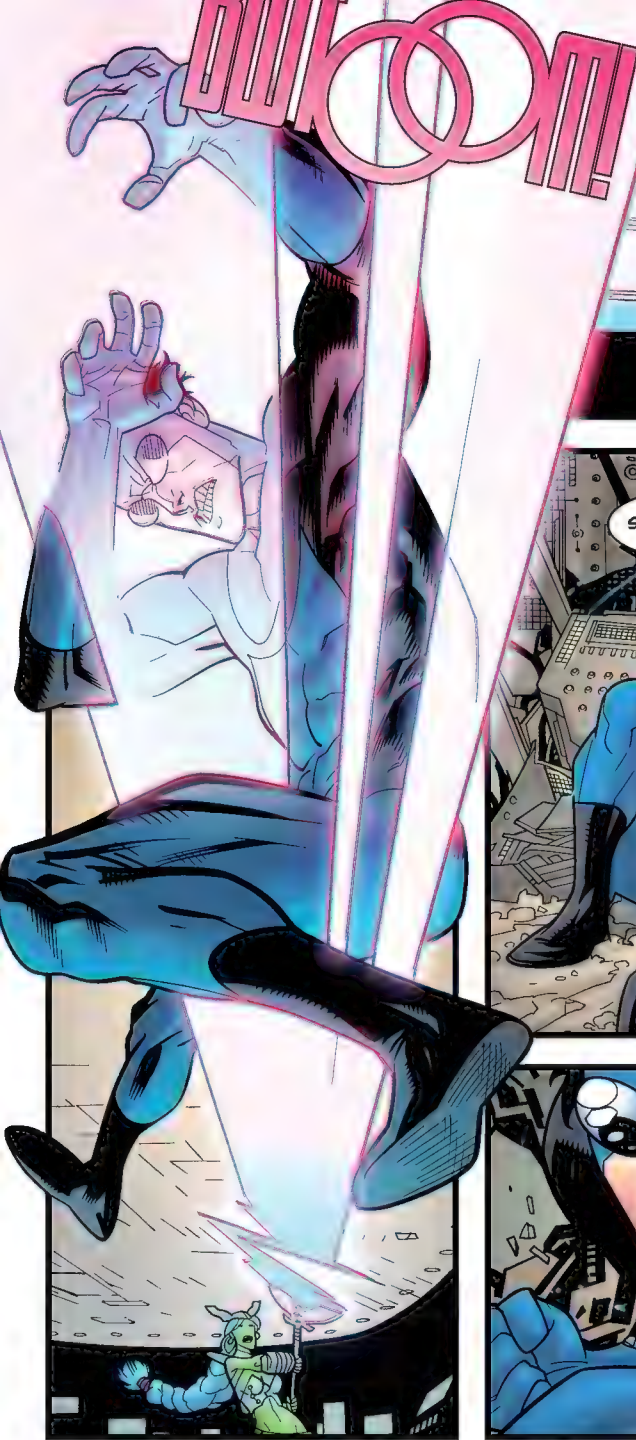
AS LONG  
AS THEY HAVE  
AT LEAST **ONE**  
HOST TO ATTACH  
THEMSelves TO  
THEIR MINDS  
REMAIN LINKED--  
NO HOST,  
AND THEY'RE  
MINDLESS  
DRONES.

I DON'T  
THINK I  
HAVE TO TELL  
YOU WHAT  
HAPPENS IF  
WE FAIL.





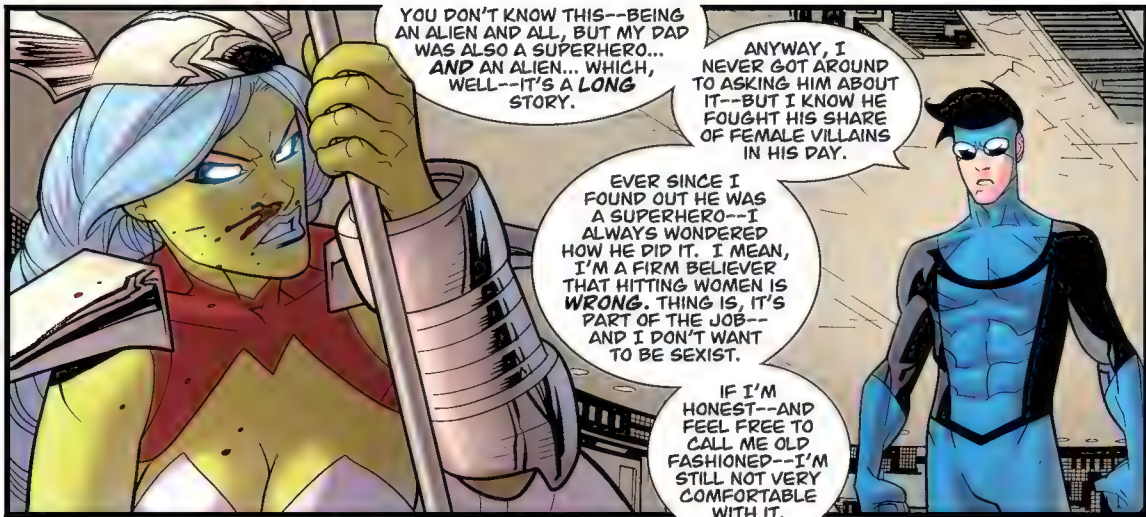




WHUDD!







YOU DON'T KNOW THIS--BEING AN ALIEN AND ALL, BUT MY DAD WAS ALSO A SUPERHERO... AND AN ALIEN... WHICH, WELL--IT'S A LONG STORY.

ANYWAY, I NEVER GOT AROUND TO ASKING HIM ABOUT IT--BUT I KNOW HE FOUGHT HIS SHARE OF FEMALE VILLAINS IN HIS DAY.

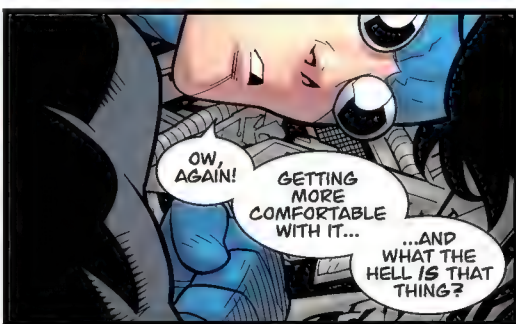
EVER SINCE I FOUND OUT HE WAS A SUPERHERO--I ALWAYS WONDERED HOW HE DID IT. I MEAN, I'M A FIRM BELIEVER THAT HITTING WOMEN IS WRONG. THING IS, IT'S PART OF THE JOB-- AND I DON'T WANT TO BE SEXIST.

IF I'M HONEST--AND FEEL FREE TO CALL ME OLD FASHIONED--I'M STILL NOT VERY COMFORTABLE WITH IT.



**WTOOM!**

SILENCE!



OW, AGAIN!

GETTING MORE COMFORTABLE WITH IT...

...AND WHAT THE HELL IS THAT THING?



THIS IS THE STAFF OF LEADERSHIP--IT HAS BEEN PASSED DOWN FROM ONE RULER TO THE NEXT ON MY PLANET FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS.

IT EMITS A POWERFUL ENERGY BURST--A PULSE CONTAINING TWO DISTINCT ENERGY PATTERNS FUSED INTO ONE--A BURST CAPABLE OF LEVELING CITIES--ENDING CIVILIZATIONS--

--MORE THAN ENOUGH TO DESTROY YOU!

**RUITOOSH!**



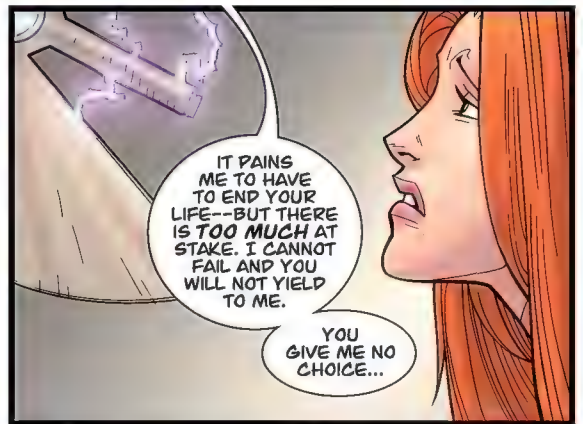
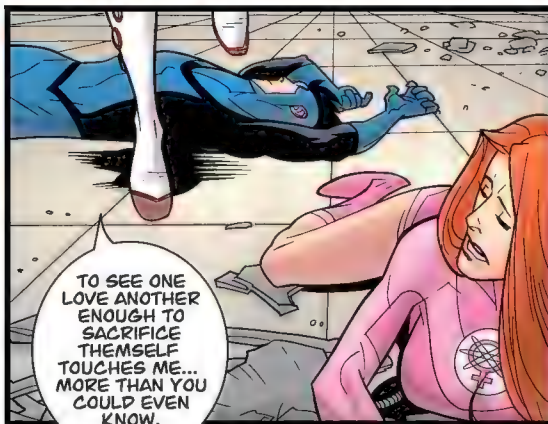
NNGGH!

--CAN'T!





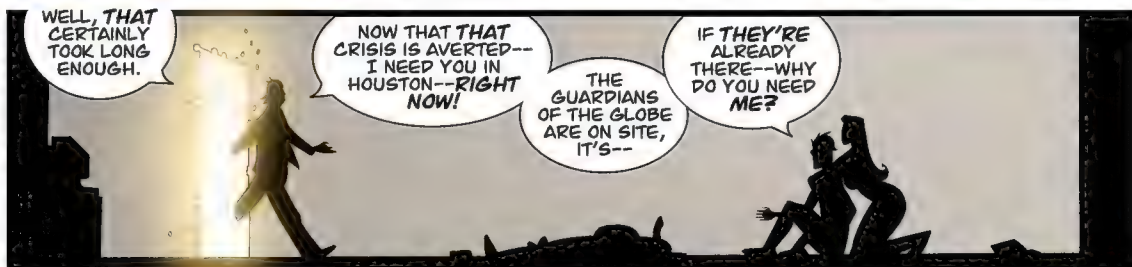
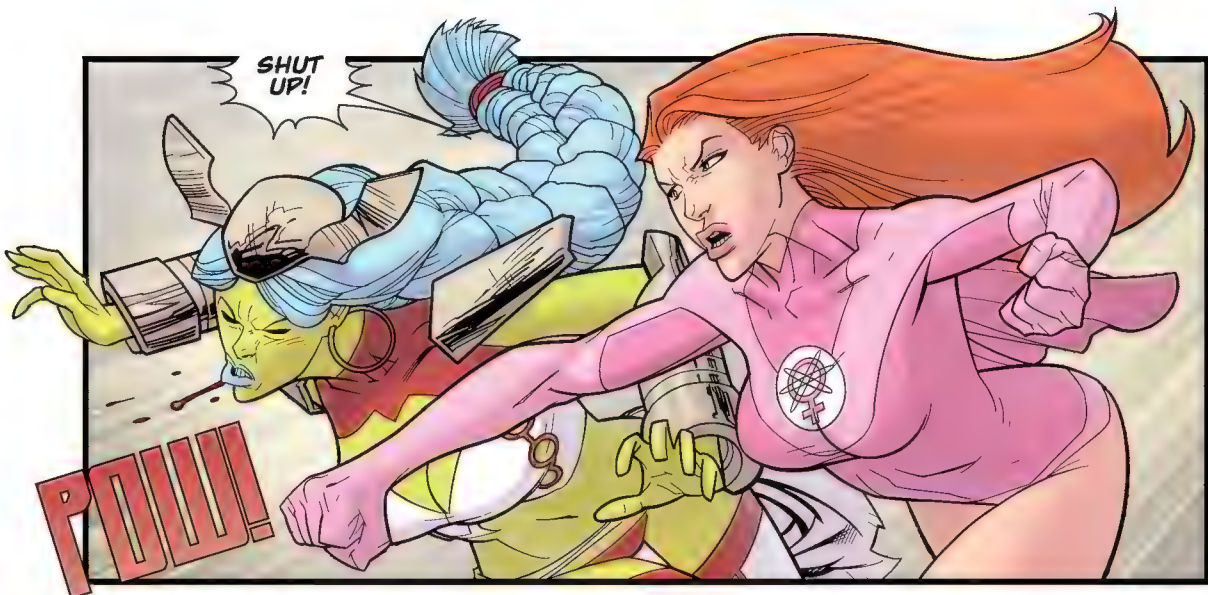
















ALL  
TOO  
EASY!



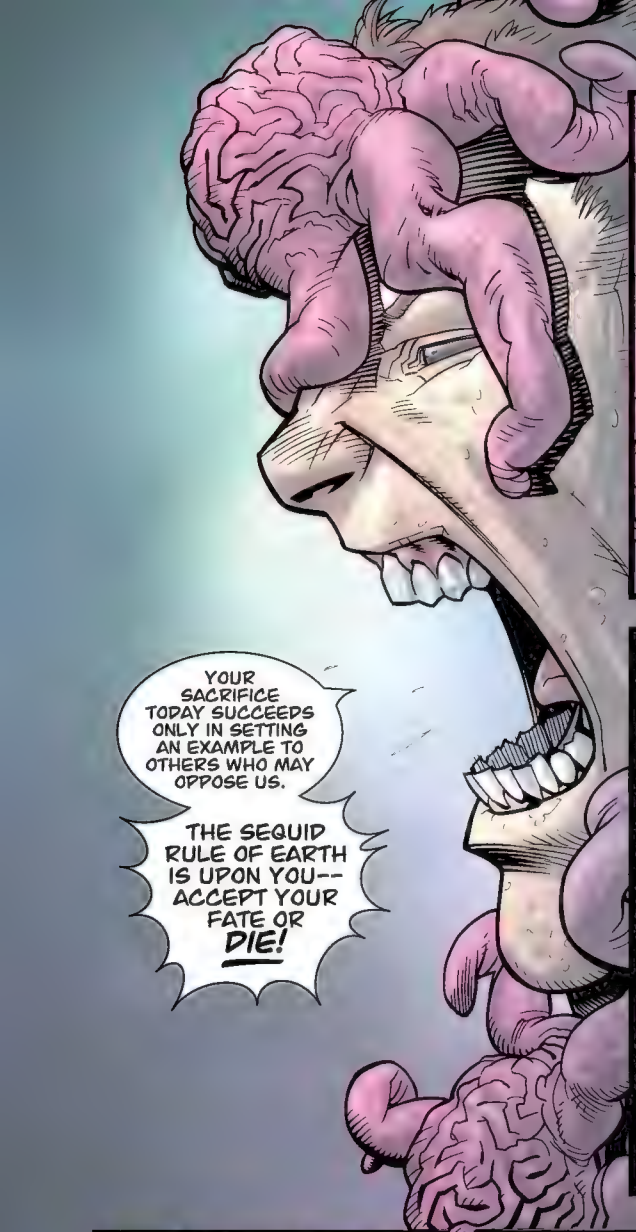




# CHAPTER 70







YOUR  
SACRIFICE  
TODAY SUCCEEDS  
ONLY IN SETTING  
AN EXAMPLE TO  
OTHERS WHO MAY  
OPPOSE US.

THE SEQUID  
RULE OF EARTH  
IS UPON YOU--  
ACCEPT YOUR  
FATE OR  
**DIE!**

KEEP  
RANTING...

WARRA  
KUKT!

LET THIS  
BE A LESSON  
TO ALL WHO  
OPPOSE THIS  
NEW WORLD  
THAT IS  
DAWNING!

WE  
ARE YOUR  
MASTERS  
NOW!

OKAY,  
I'M IN.

MY SUIT IS  
CLOSING UP--  
THE SEQUIDS  
SHOULD HAVE  
NO IDEA I'M NO  
LONGER INSIDE,  
I CAN CONTROL  
IT FROM  
HERE.

EVERYONE,  
WAIT FOR MY  
SIGNAL.

WE'VE GOT  
TO RESUME THE  
ATTACK--KEEP  
HIM OCCUPIED  
WHILE WE  
EVACUATE THE  
REST OF THE  
CIVILIANS.

BOW BEFORE  
THE MIGHT OF  
THE SEQUID  
EMPI--

HUH?











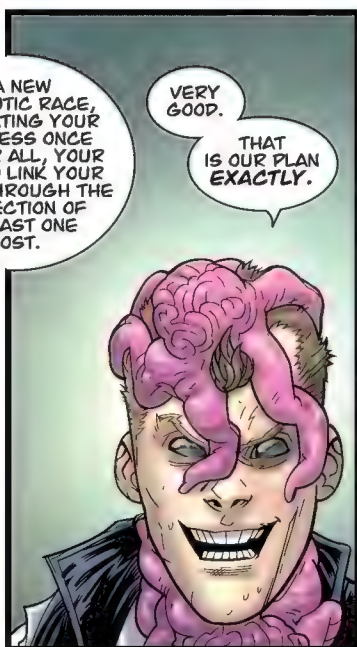
SO YOU'RE WANTING  
TO TAKE OVER THIS  
PLANET AND THEN  
ATTACK MARS... SOME  
KIND OF REVENGE  
THING?

COMBINING  
YOUR RACE WITH  
OURS--INCREASING  
YOUR NUMBER OF  
HOSTS TO A LEVEL  
THAT WOULD LEAD  
TO YOU NEVER  
BEING WITHOUT  
ONE...

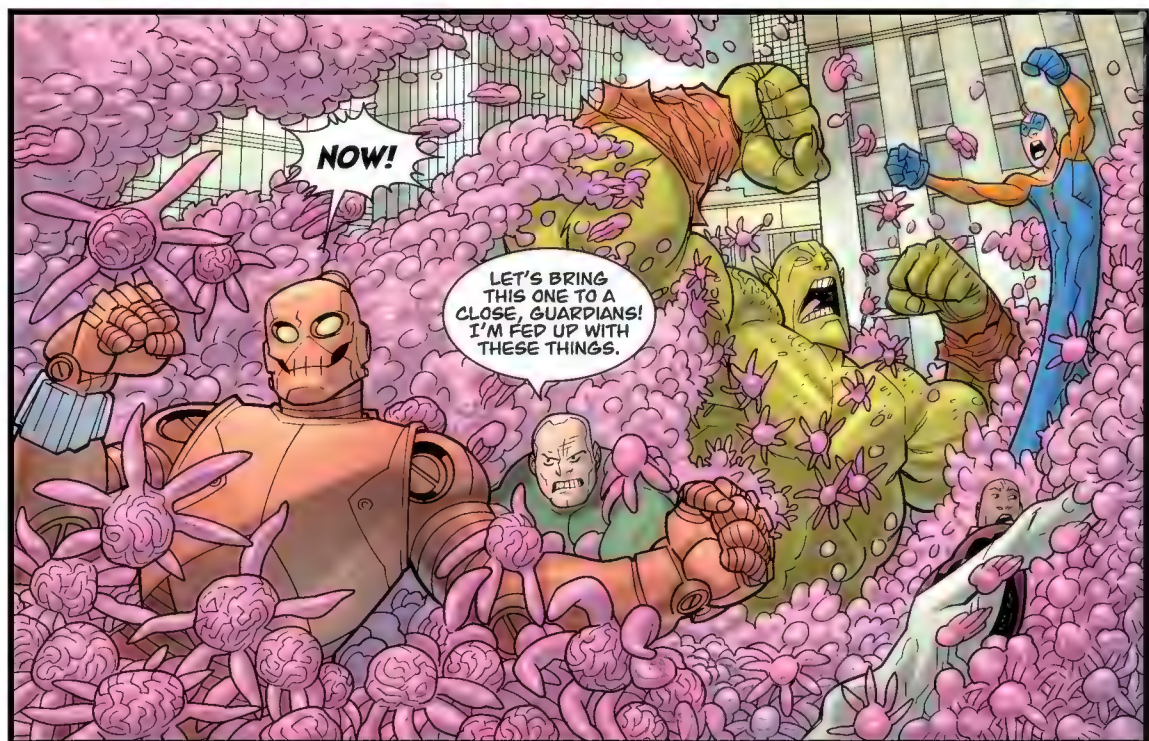
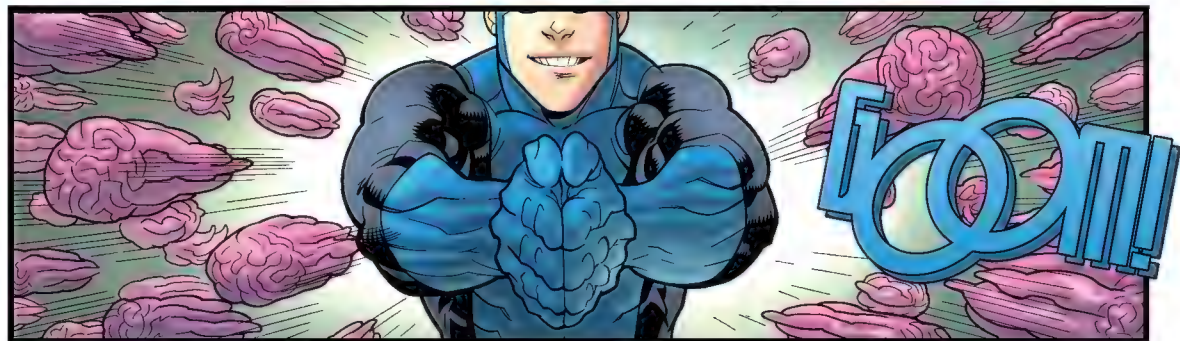
...A NEW  
SYMBIOTIC RACE,  
ELIMINATING YOUR  
WEAKNESS ONCE  
AND FOR ALL, YOUR  
NEED TO LINK YOUR  
MINDS THROUGH THE  
CONNECTION OF  
AT LEAST ONE  
HOST.

VERY  
GOOD.

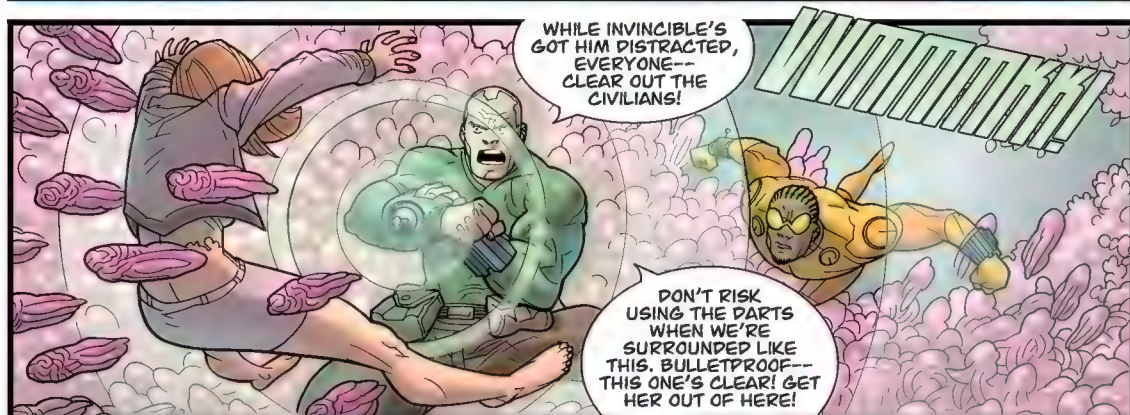
THAT  
IS OUR PLAN  
EXACTLY.



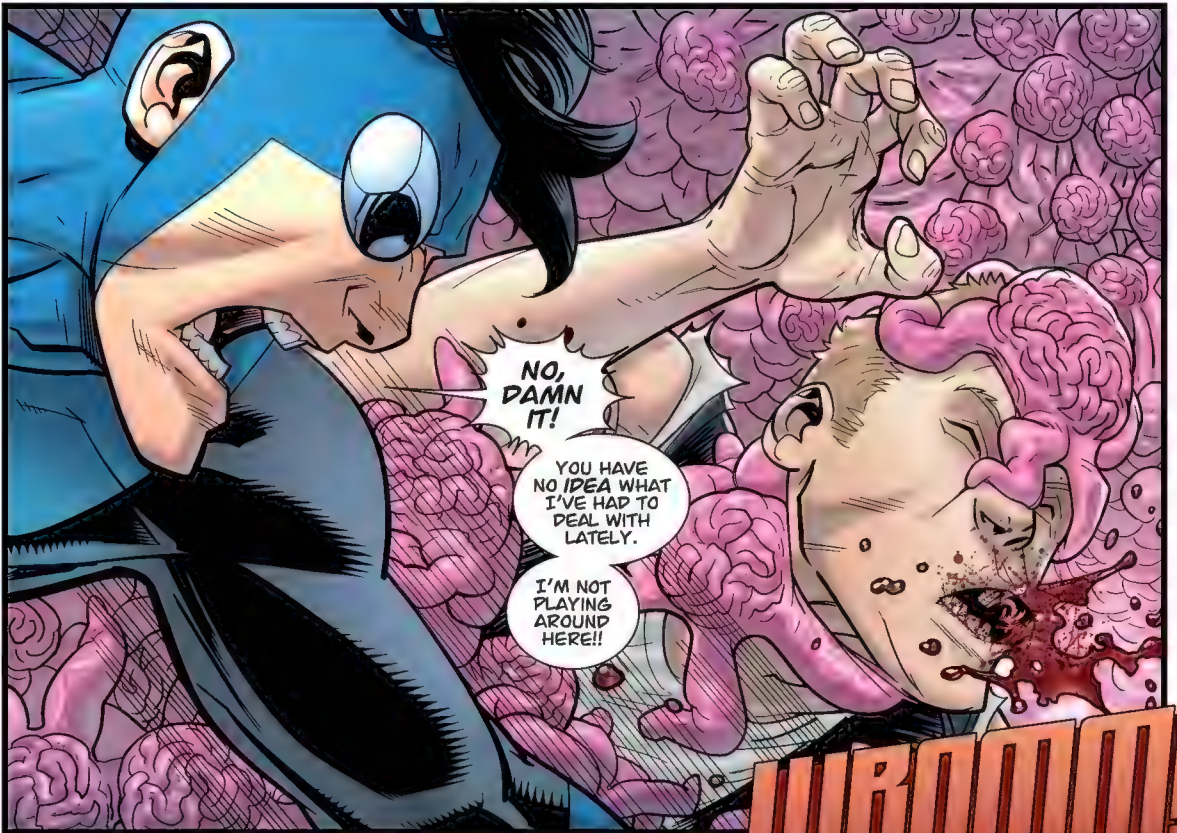
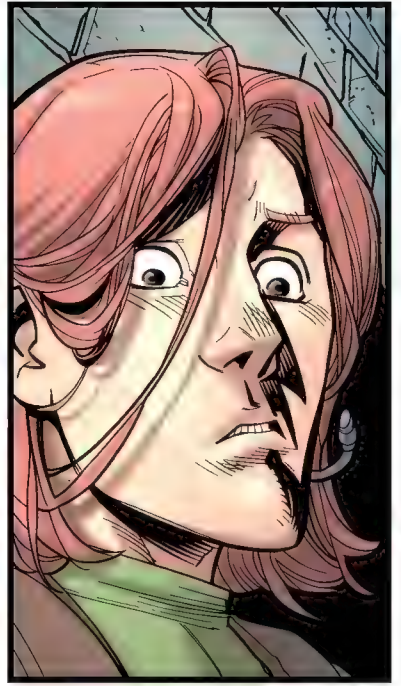
WELL,  
IT AIN'T  
GOING TO  
HAPPEN!





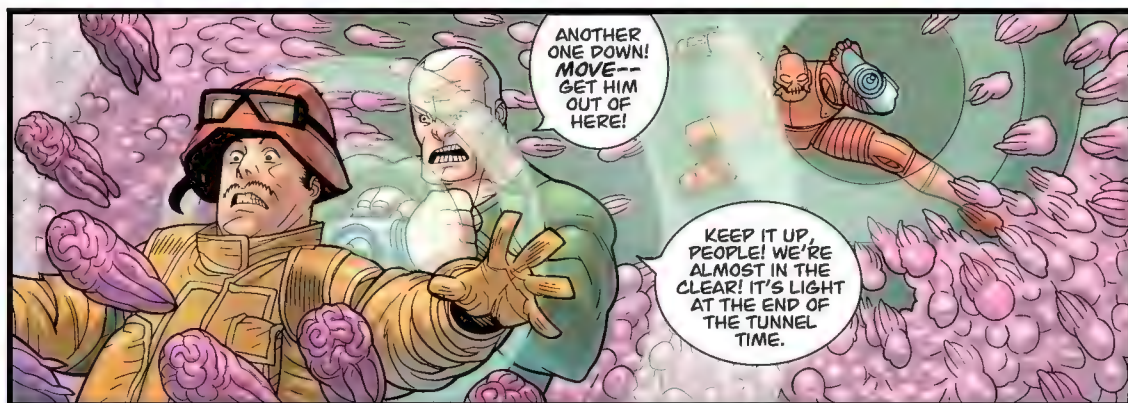
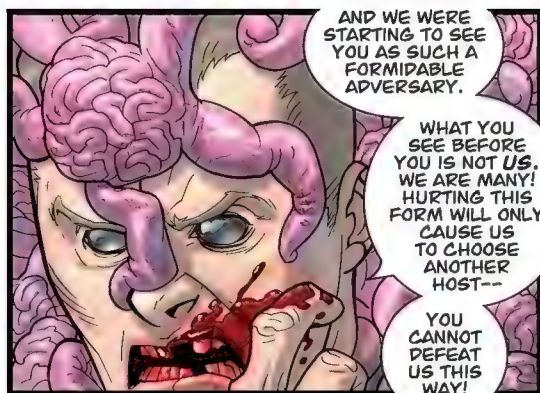




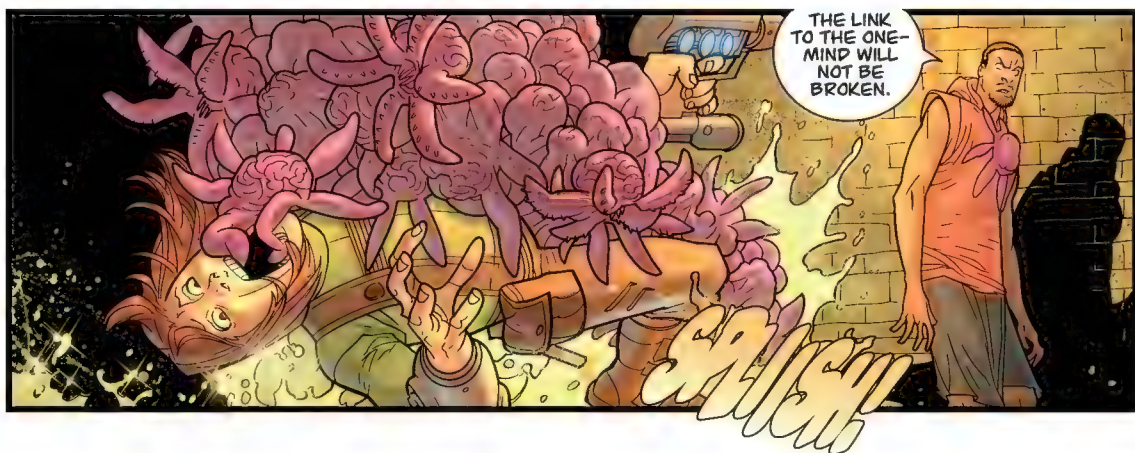


**WRAMMM!!**

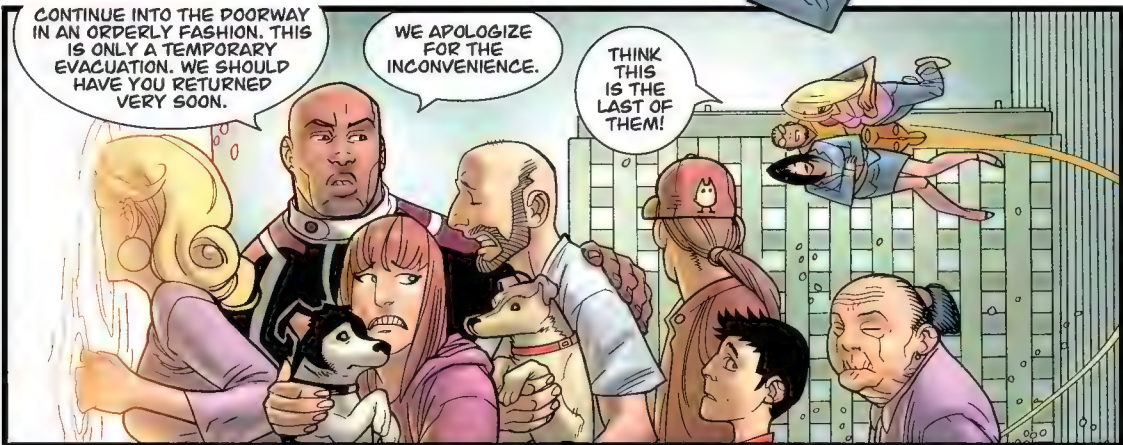
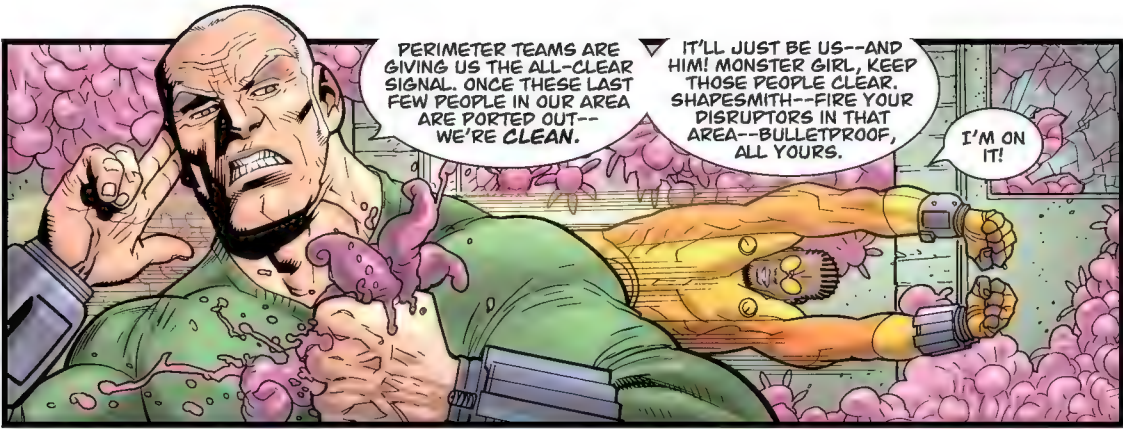




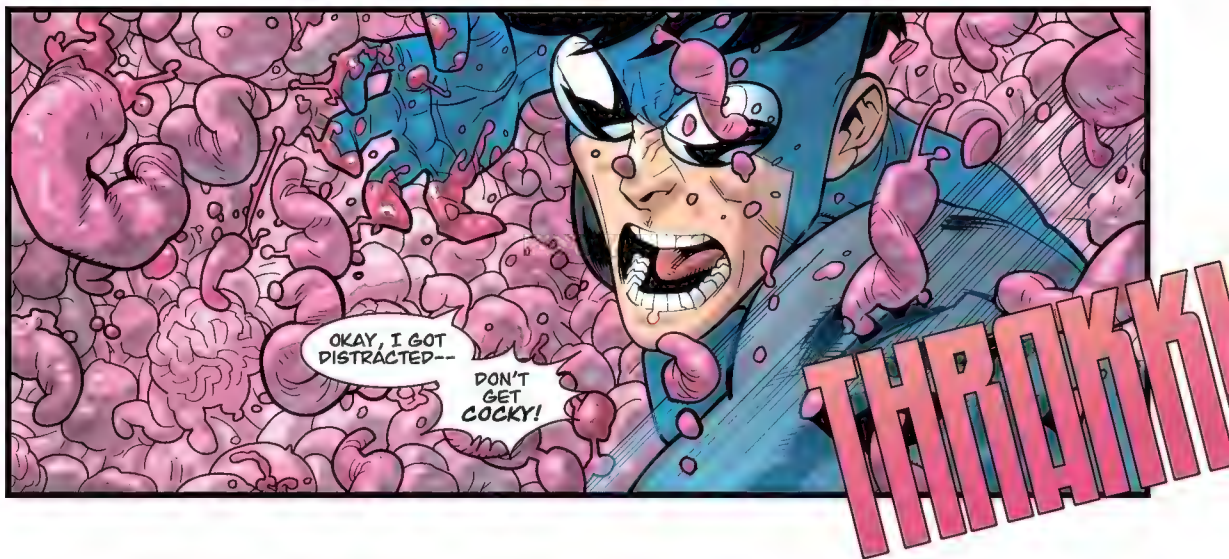
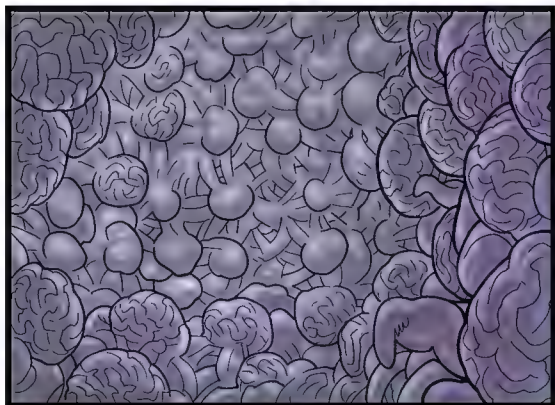




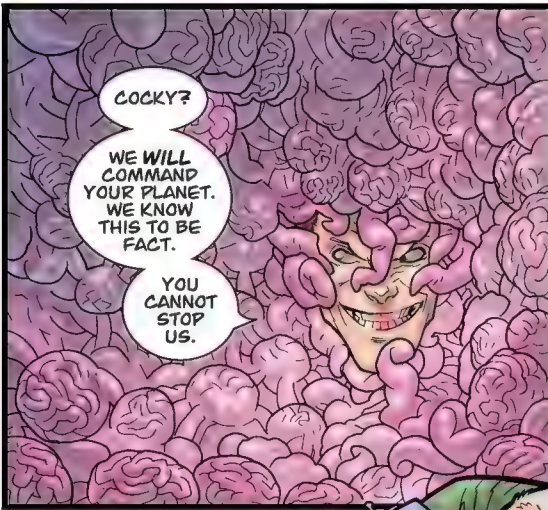












COCKY?

WE WILL  
COMMAND  
YOUR PLANET.  
WE KNOW  
THIS TO BE  
FACT.

YOU  
CANNOT  
STOP  
US.



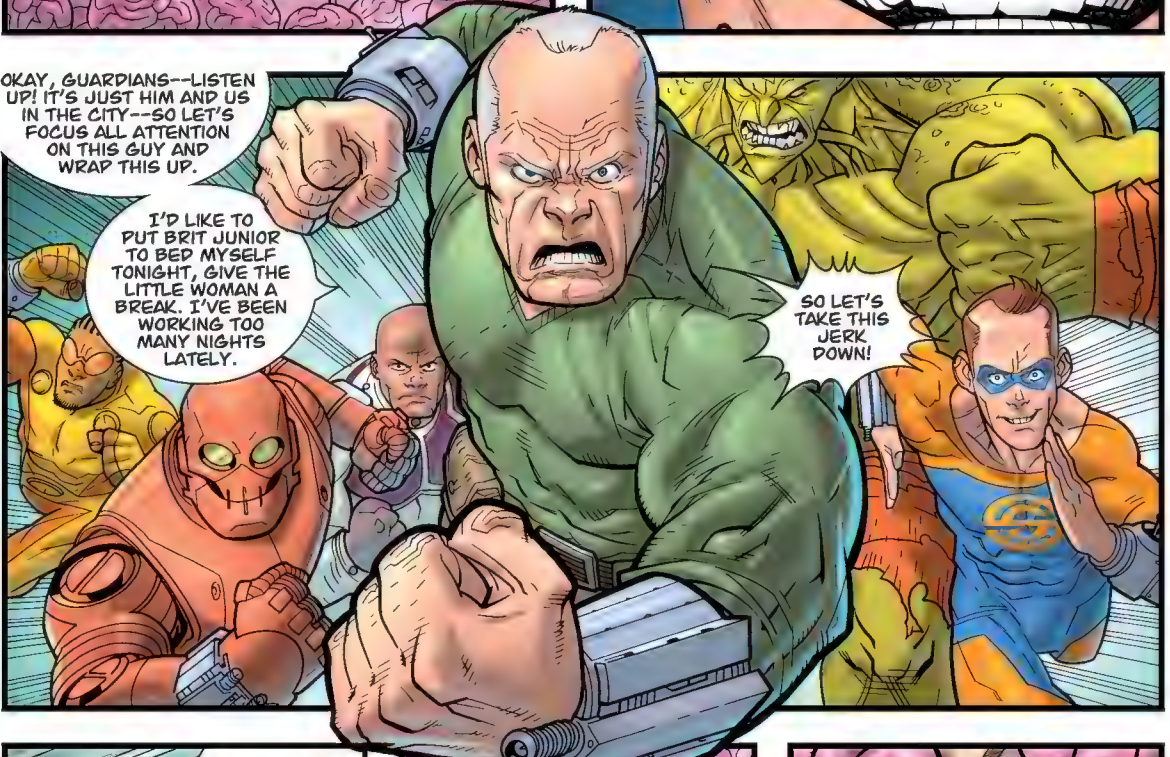
REALLY?  
HAH!

I DON'T  
THINK YOU'VE  
BEEN PAYING  
ATTENTION.

OKAY, GUARDIANS--LISTEN  
UP! IT'S JUST HIM AND US  
IN THE CITY--SO LET'S  
FOCUS ALL ATTENTION  
ON THIS GUY AND  
WRAP THIS UP.

I'D LIKE TO  
PUT BRIT JUNIOR  
TO BED MYSELF  
TONIGHT, GIVE THE  
LITTLE WOMAN A  
BREAK. I'VE BEEN  
WORKING TOO  
MANY NIGHTS  
LATELY.

SO LET'S  
TAKE THIS  
JERK  
DOWN!



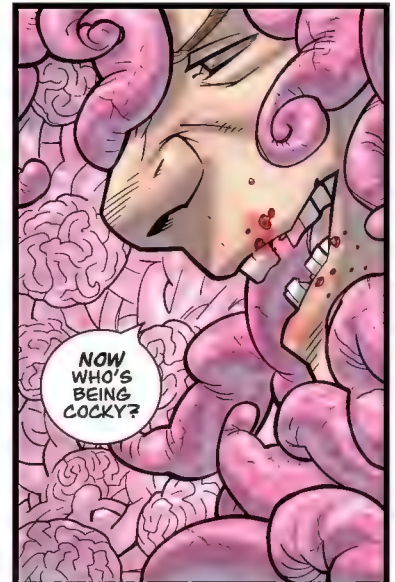
HE HAD A HOST  
HIDDEN IN THE  
SEWERS, BUT I  
TOOK CARE OF  
HIM--I'M BACK  
AT THE HOLDING  
AREA NOW  
WITH THE  
REST OF THE  
REFUGEES.

LET'S  
BRING  
THESE  
PEOPLE  
HOME.



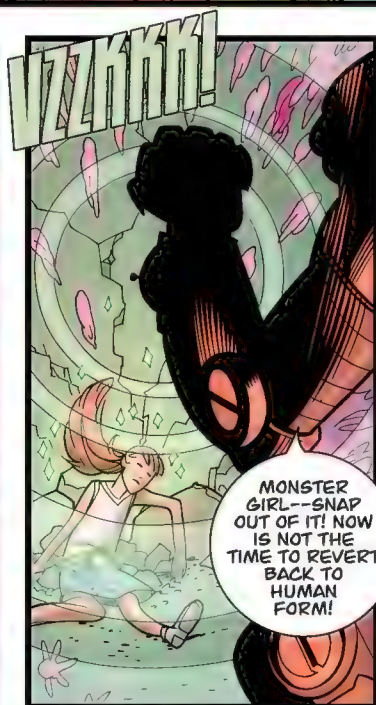
HEAR THAT,  
SEQUIP MAN--  
OR WHATEVER  
YOU'RE  
CALLING  
YOURSELF...

...IT'S  
ONLY A  
MATTER  
OF TIME.

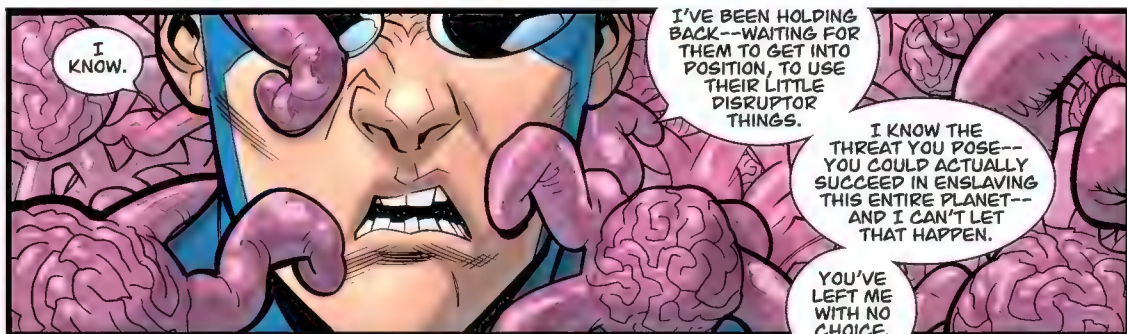
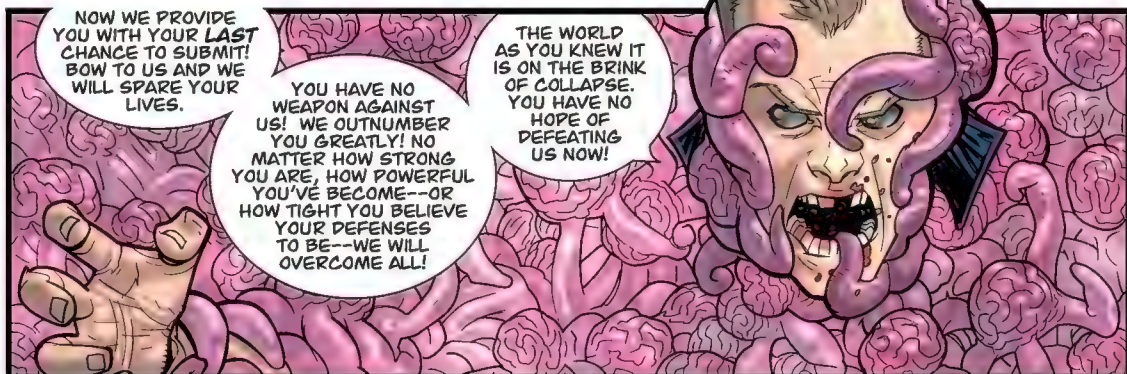
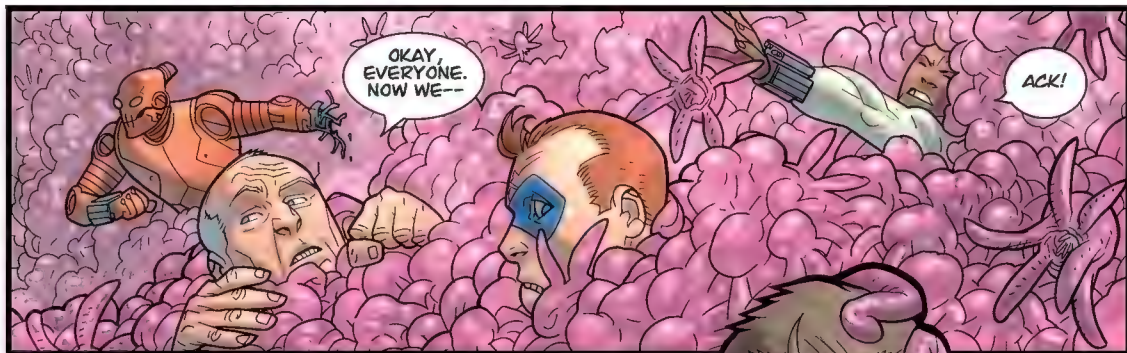
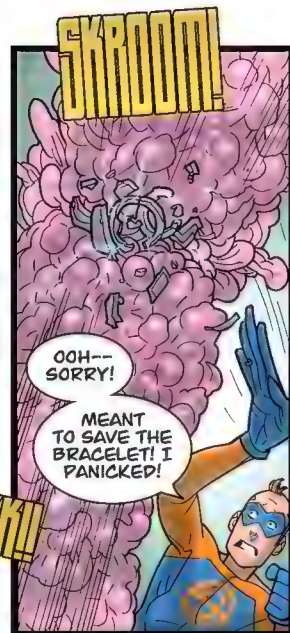
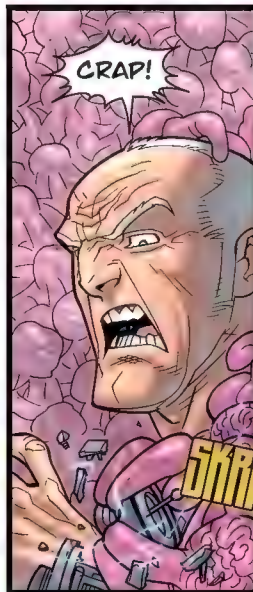
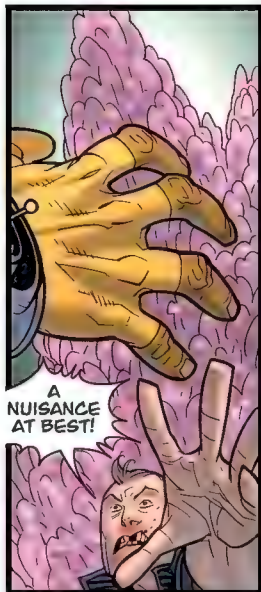


NOW  
WHO'S  
BEING  
COCKY?

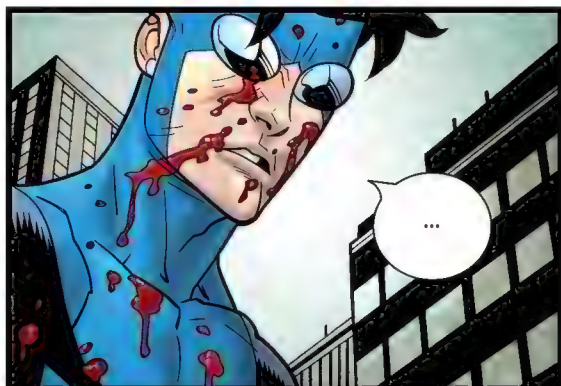
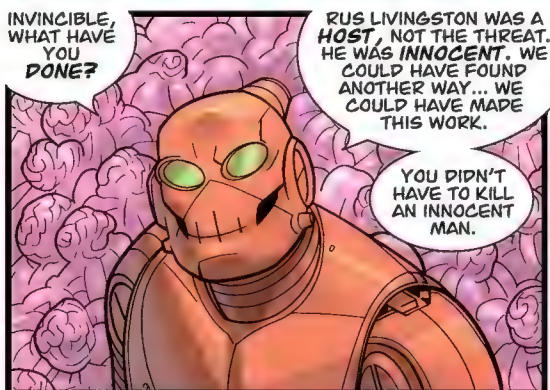
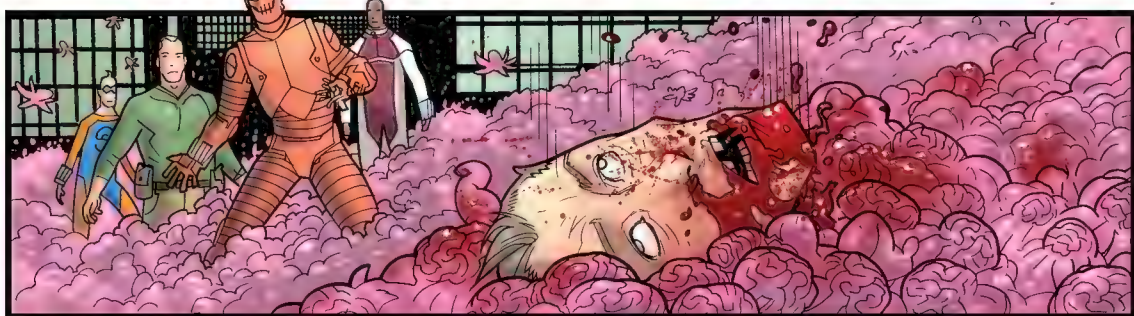




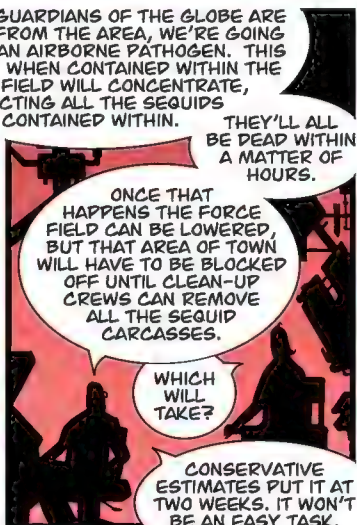
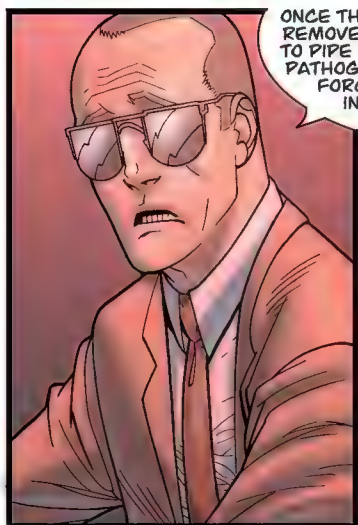
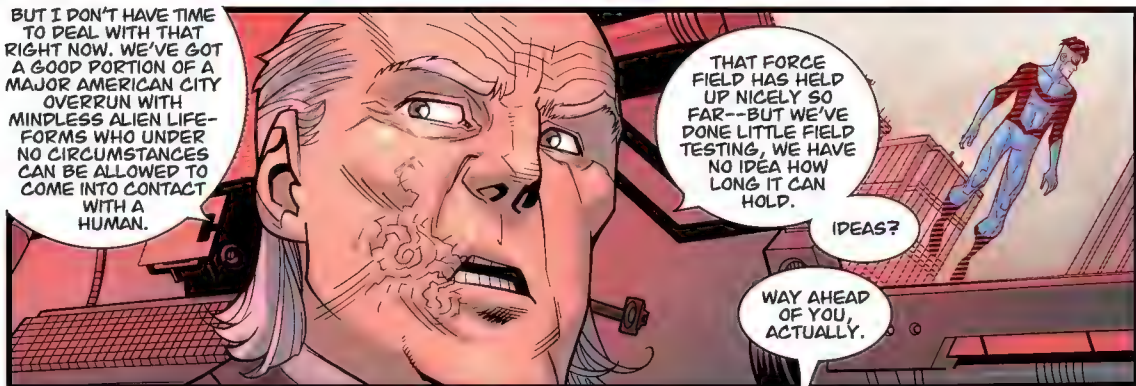
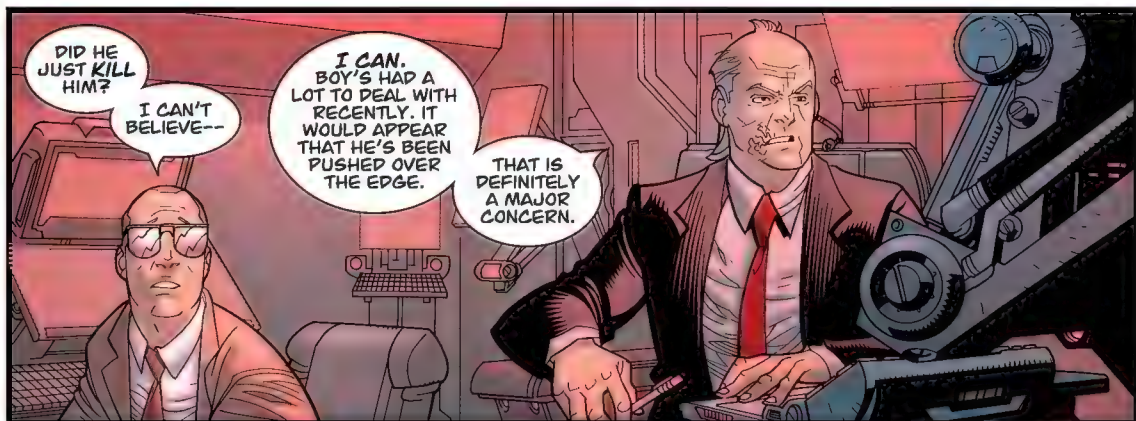
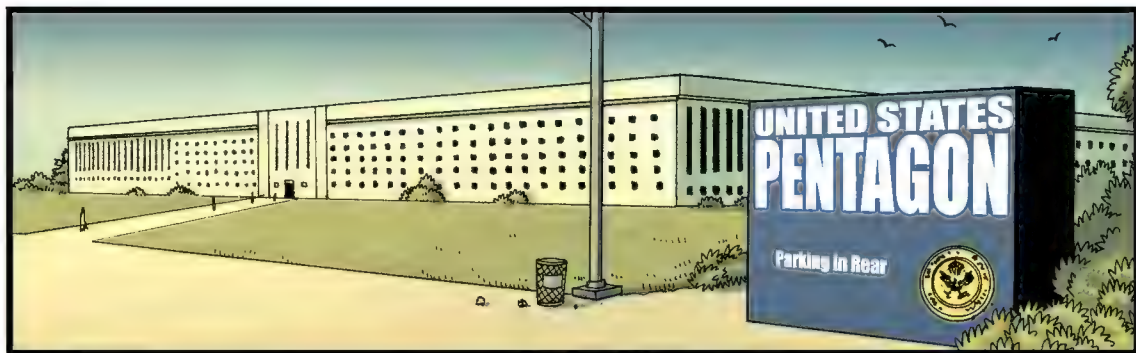




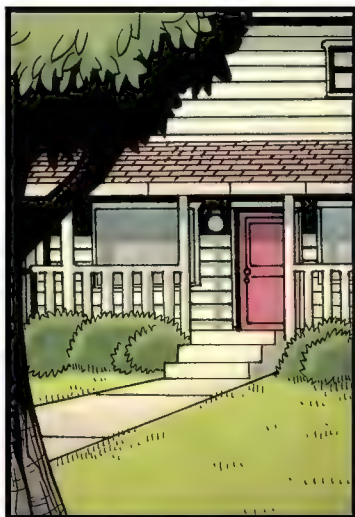










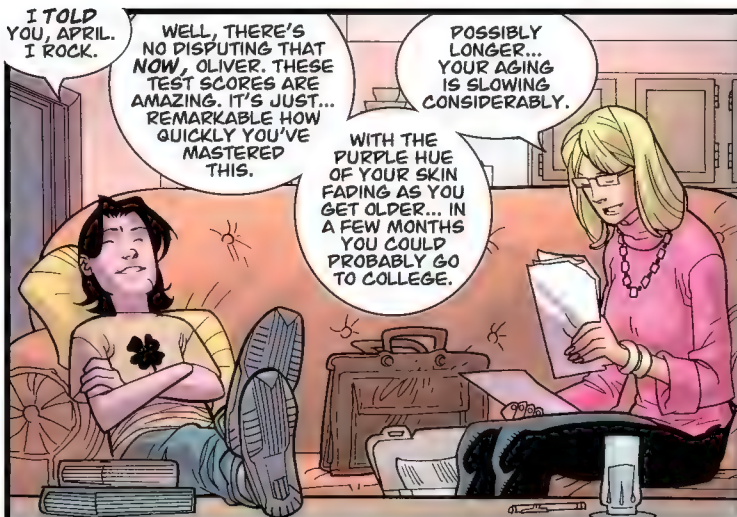


I TOLD YOU, APRIL. I ROCK.

WELL, THERE'S NO DISPUTING THAT NOW, OLIVER. THESE TEST SCORES ARE AMAZING. IT'S JUST... REMARKABLE HOW QUICKLY YOU'VE MASTERED THIS.

POSSIBLY LONGER... YOUR AGING IS SLOWING CONSIDERABLY.

WITH THE PURPLE HUE OF YOUR SKIN FADING AS YOU GET OLDER... IN A FEW MONTHS YOU COULD PROBABLY GO TO COLLEGE.



YOU THINK I'LL BE AN ADULT SOON? I'VE DONE SOME MATH, TRYING TO EXTRAPOLATE THE RATE AT WHICH I'LL HIT CERTAIN AGES, BUT WITH MY PROGRESSION SLOWING AT SUCH AN ABRUPT RATE...

MY DATA IS KIND OF USELESS.



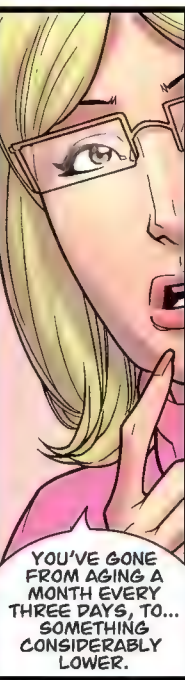
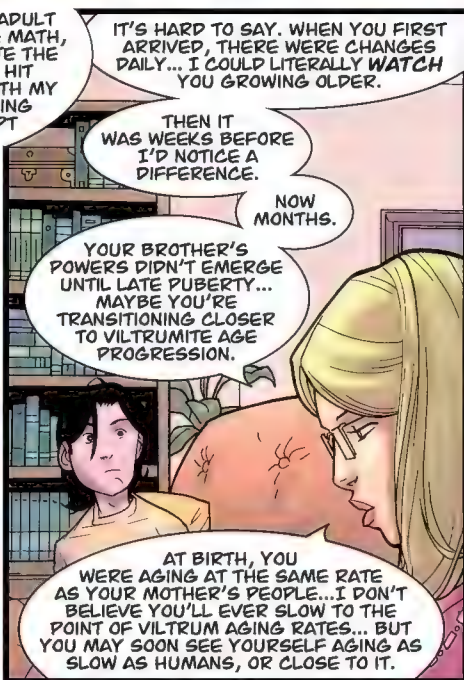
IT'S HARD TO SAY. WHEN YOU FIRST ARRIVED, THERE WERE CHANGES DAILY... I COULD LITERALLY WATCH YOU GROWING OLDER.

THEN IT WAS WEEKS BEFORE I'D NOTICE A DIFFERENCE.

NOW MONTHS.

YOUR BROTHER'S POWERS DIDN'T EMERGE UNTIL LATE PUBERTY... MAYBE YOU'RE TRANSITIONING CLOSER TO VILTRUMITE AGE PROGRESSION.

AT BIRTH, YOU WERE AGING AT THE SAME RATE AS YOUR MOTHER'S PEOPLE... I DON'T BELIEVE YOU'LL EVER SLOW TO THE POINT OF VILTRUMITE AGING RATES... BUT YOU MAY SOON SEE YOURSELF AGING AS SLOW AS HUMANS, OR CLOSE TO IT.



YOU'VE GONE FROM AGING A MONTH EVERY THREE DAYS, TO... SOMETHING CONSIDERABLY LOWER.

YOU APPEAR TO BE FOURTEEN, MAYBE FIFTEEN NOW. IT COULD BE A YEAR OR EVEN TWO BEFORE YOU REACH ADULTHOOD.

CRUD.



WELL, I GUESS YOU ACTUALLY DIDN'T NEED MY HELP, THEN?

I'LL BE IN MY ROOM.

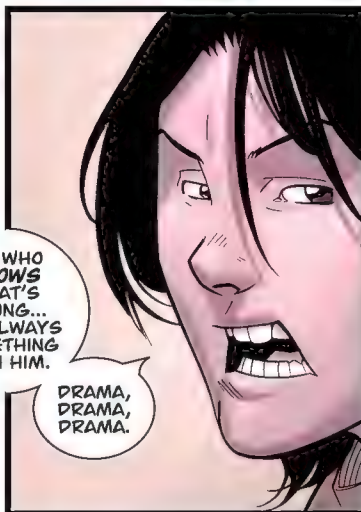


WHAT WAS THAT? YOU GUYS AREN'T FIGHTING AGAIN, ARE YOU?

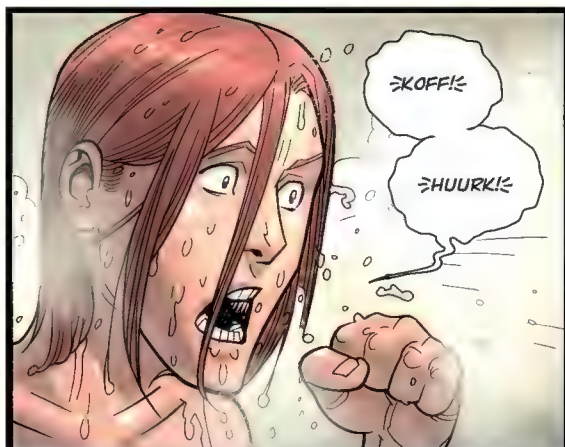
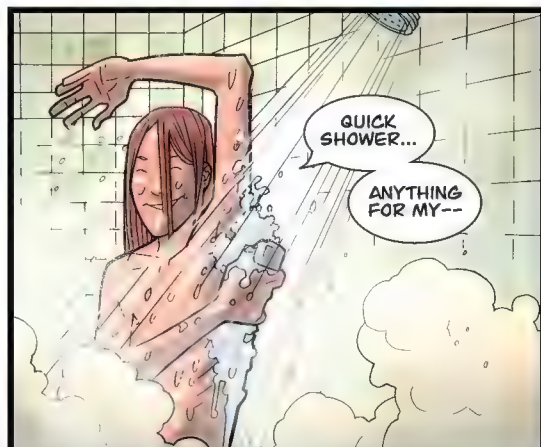
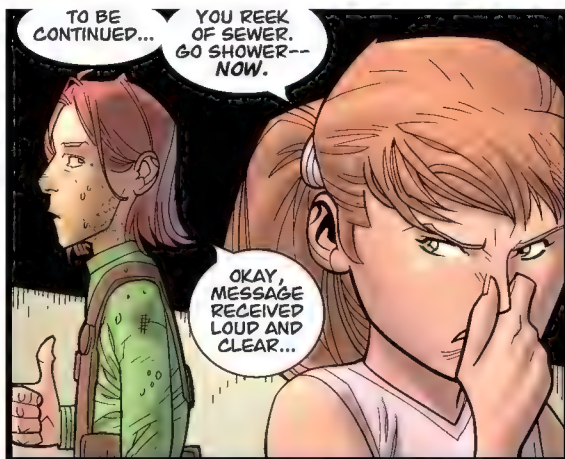
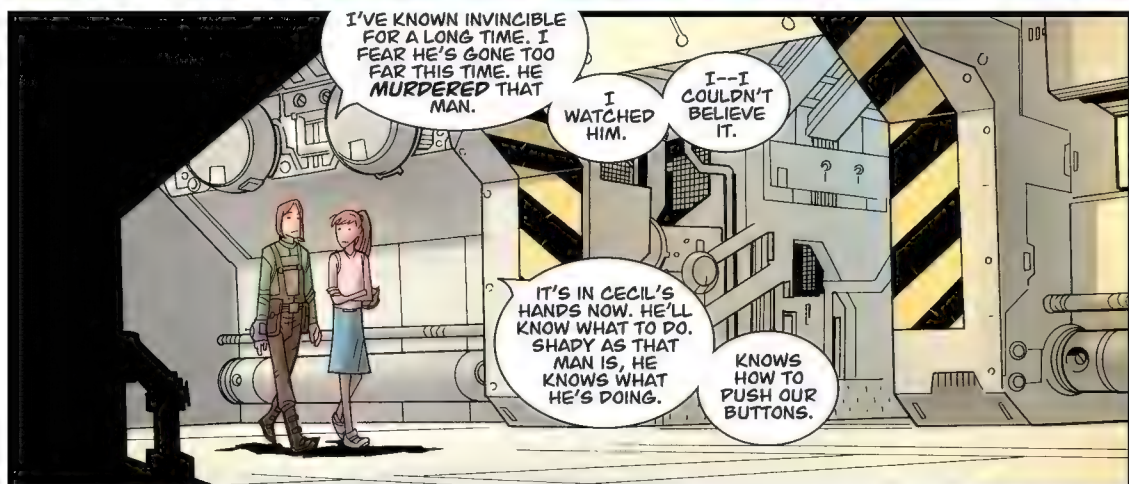
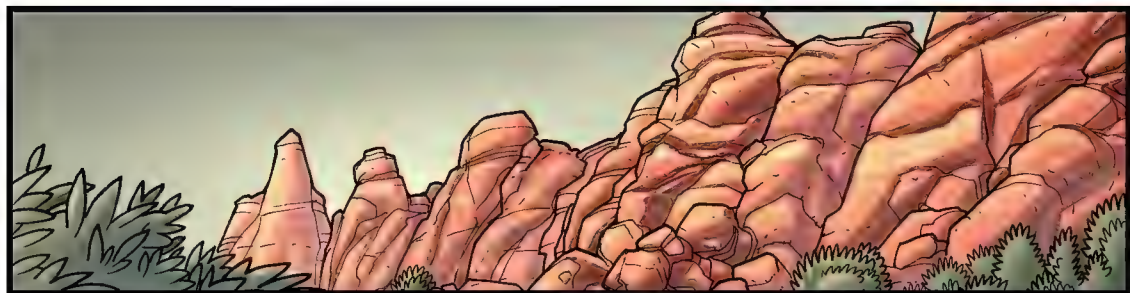


NO. WHO KNOWS WHAT'S WRONG... IT'S ALWAYS SOMETHING WITH HIM.

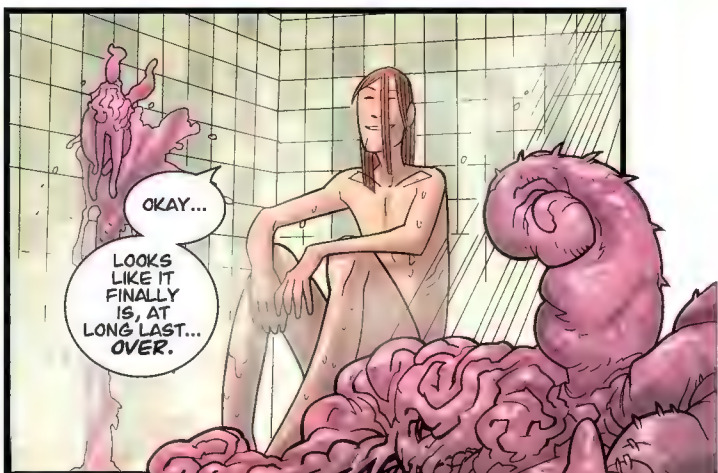
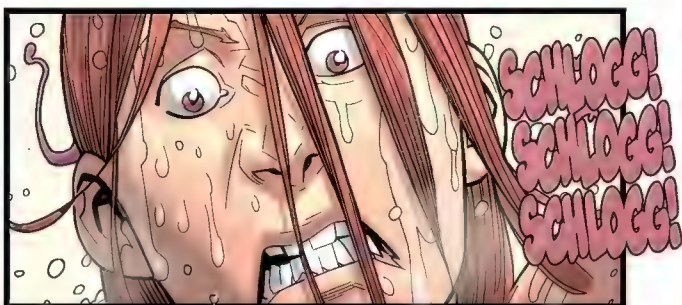
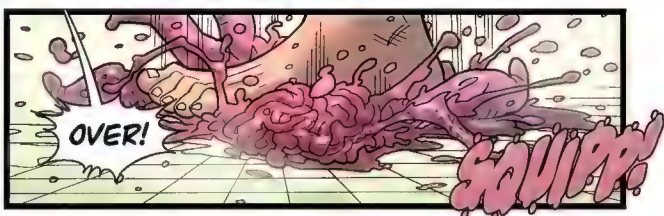
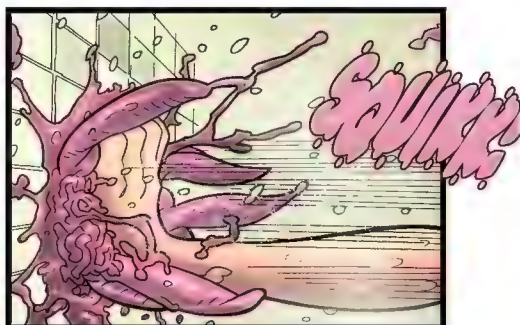
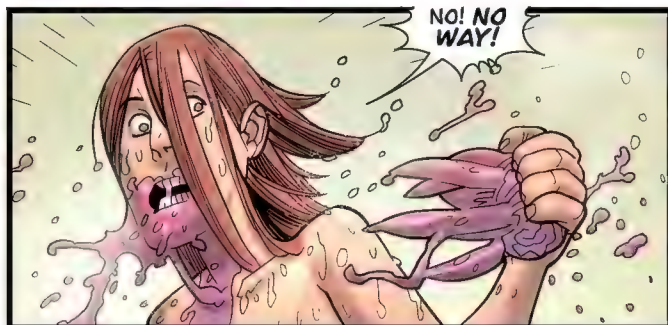
DRAMA, DRAMA, DRAMA.



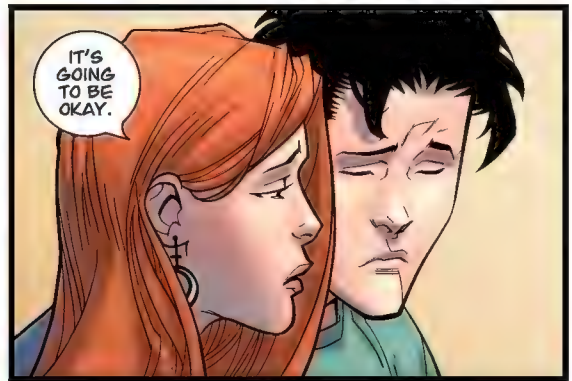
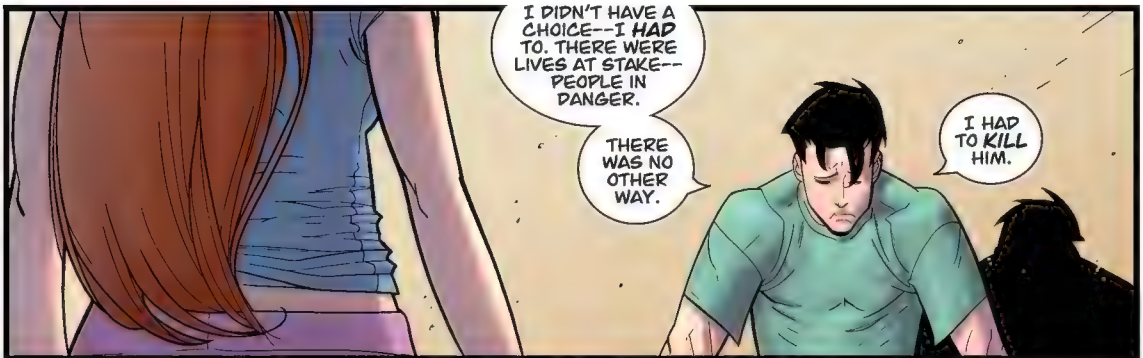
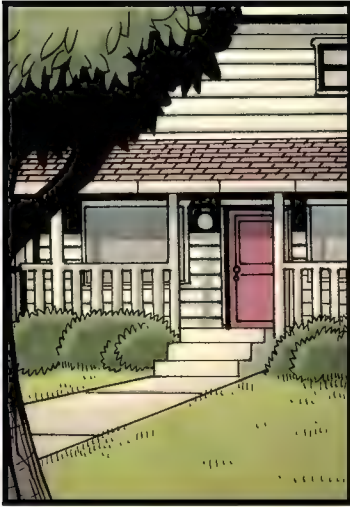




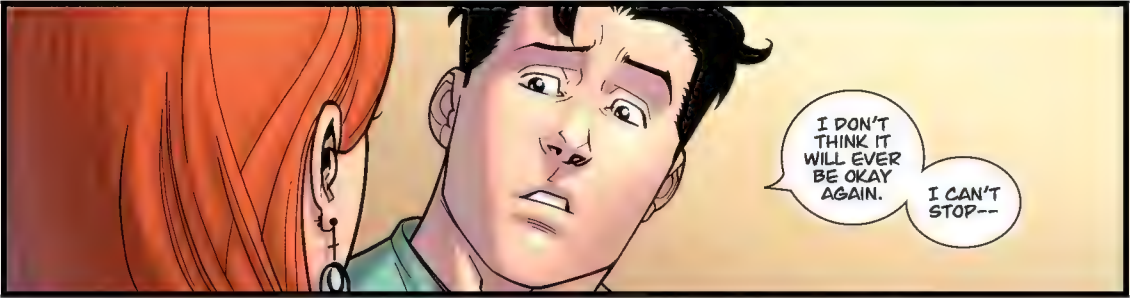
















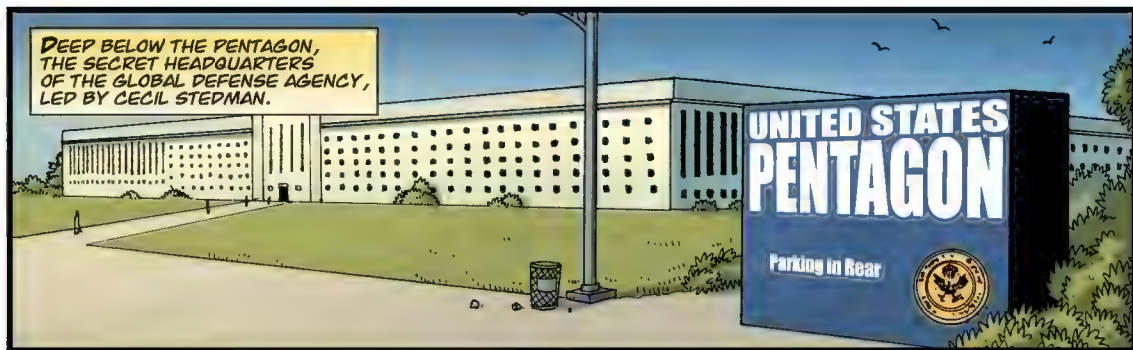


# INVINCIBLE RETURNS I

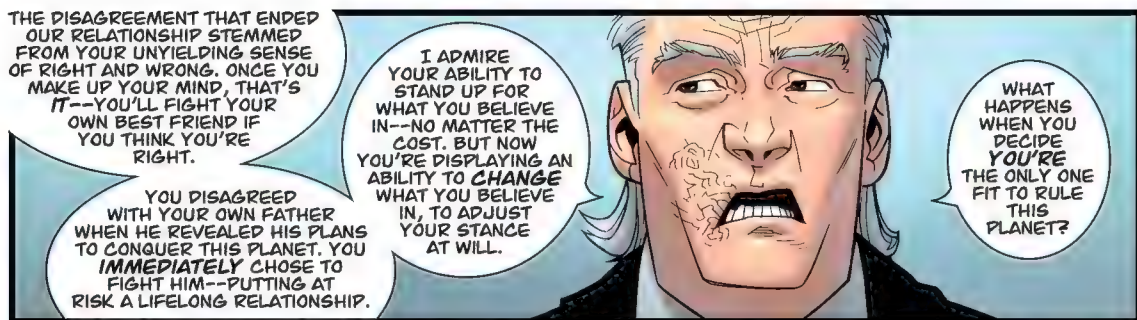


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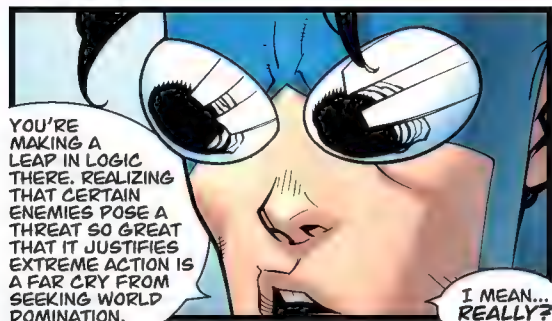


THE DISAGREEMENT THAT ENDED OUR RELATIONSHIP STEMMED FROM YOUR UNYIELDING SENSE OF RIGHT AND WRONG. ONCE YOU MAKE UP YOUR MIND, THAT'S IT--YOU'LL FIGHT YOUR OWN BEST FRIEND IF YOU THINK YOU'RE RIGHT.

YOU DISAGREED WITH YOUR OWN FATHER WHEN HE REVEALED HIS PLANS TO CONQUER THIS PLANET. YOU IMMEDIATELY CHOSE TO FIGHT HIM--PUTTING AT RISK A LIFELONG RELATIONSHIP.

I ADMIRE YOUR ABILITY TO STAND UP FOR WHAT YOU BELIEVE IN--NO MATTER THE COST. BUT NOW YOU'RE DISPLAYING AN ABILITY TO **CHANGE** WHAT YOU BELIEVE IN, TO ADJUST YOUR STANCE AT WILL.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU DECIDE YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE FIT TO RULE THIS PLANET?



YOU'RE MAKING A LEAP IN LOGIC THERE, REALIZING THAT CERTAIN ENEMIES POSE A THREAT SO GREAT THAT IT JUSTIFIES EXTREME ACTION IS A FAR CRY FROM SEEKING WORLD DOMINATION.

I MEAN... REALLY?



HOLD THAT THOUGHT. SINCLAIR, ARE YOU READY TO RECEIVE US?



GIVE ME ANOTHER THIRTY SECONDS AND WE'LL BE CLEAR.

WHY DOES HE WANT ME HERE FOR THIS?

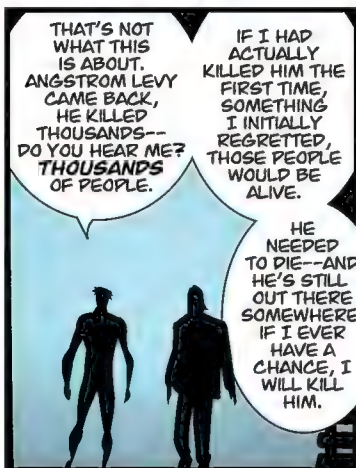
I HAVE NO IDEA. HELP ME GET THESE CANISTERS CLOSED. HE WANTS THEM HIDDEN FOR SOME REASON.



YOUR TEMPER GETS THE BETTER OF YOU MORE TIMES THAN I WOULD LIKE. IT'S BRED INTO YOU--IN YOUR BLOOD.

YOU ARE A **VILTRUMITE**, THAT APPEARS TO COME WITH A GOOD DEAL OF BUILT-IN AGGRESSION.

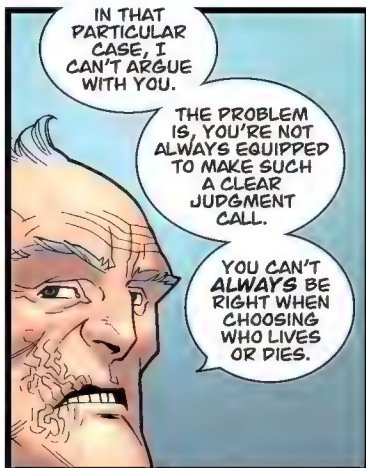
WE'VE DISCUSSED THIS, I KNOW THIS IS A CONCERN YOU SHARE.



THAT'S NOT WHAT THIS IS ABOUT. **ANGSTROM LEVY** CAME BACK, HE KILLED THOUSANDS--DO YOU HEAR ME? **THOUSANDS** OF PEOPLE.

IF I HAD ACTUALLY KILLED HIM THE FIRST TIME, SOMETHING I INITIALLY REGRETTED, THOSE PEOPLE WOULD BE ALIVE.

HE NEEDED TO DIE--AND HE'S STILL OUT THERE SOMEWHERE. IF I EVER HAVE A CHANCE, I WILL KILL HIM.



IN THAT PARTICULAR CASE, I CAN'T ARGUE WITH YOU.

THE PROBLEM IS, YOU'RE NOT ALWAYS EQUIPPED TO MAKE SUCH A CLEAR JUDGMENT CALL.

YOU CAN'T ALWAYS BE RIGHT WHEN CHOOSING WHO LIVES OR DIES.



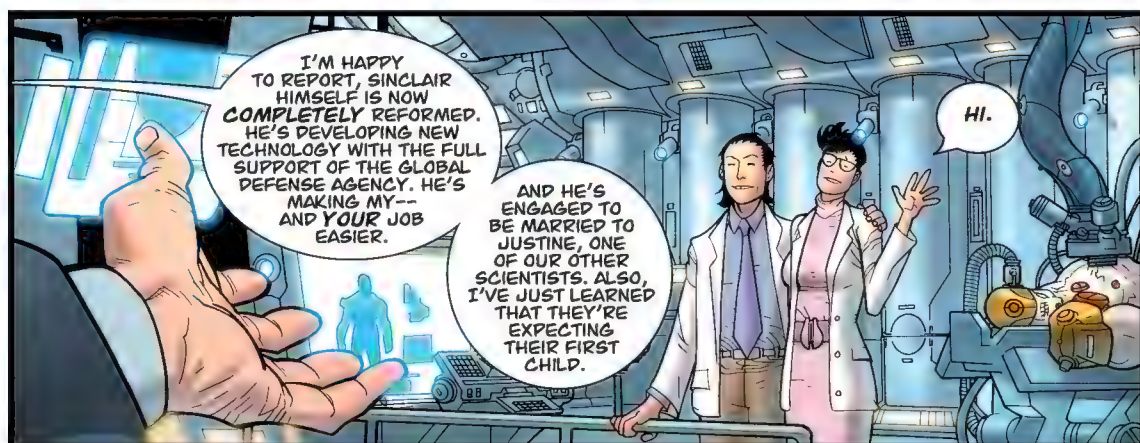


THIS IS A **LEARNING** EXPERIENCE. D.A. SINCLAIR, HE WAS DEVELOPING HIS REANIMEN TECHNOLOGY WHILE ATTENDING UPSTATE UNIVERSITY. HE EXPERIMENTED ON THE HOMELESS PEOPLE IN THE AREA--EVEN A FEW STUDENTS.

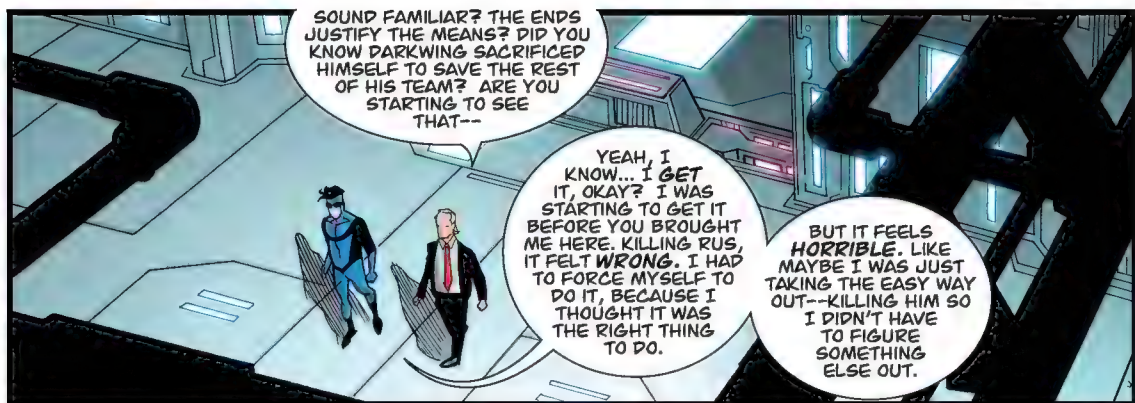
NOW THAT THE TECHNOLOGY IS IN USE, THE REANIMEN TROOPS ARE SAVING **COUNTLESS** LIVES. BUILT ON CAPAVERS NOW, THEY EACH TAKE THE PLACE OF **TWENTY** FOOT SOLDIERS.

**HORRIFIC** THINGS WERE DONE TO THOSE MEN, WE ALL AGREE ON THAT, BUT NO ONE LISTENED TO SINCLAIR, NO ONE BELIEVED HIS THEORIES AT FIRST. HE HAD TO PUT THEM INTO PRACTICE TO PROVE HIMSELF.

THEY'RE MAKING THIS WORLD A BETTER PLACE.







SOUND FAMILIAR? THE ENDS JUSTIFY THE MEANS? DID YOU KNOW DARKWING SACRIFICED HIMSELF TO SAVE THE REST OF HIS TEAM? ARE YOU STARTING TO SEE THAT--

YEAH, I KNOW... I GET IT, OKAY? I WAS STARTING TO GET IT BEFORE YOU BROUGHT ME HERE, KILLING RUS, IT FELT **WRONG**. I HAD TO FORCE MYSELF TO DO IT, BECAUSE I THOUGHT IT WAS THE RIGHT THING TO DO.

BUT IT FEELS **HORRIBLE**. LIKE MAYBE I WAS JUST TAKING THE EASY WAY OUT--KILLING HIM SO I DIDN'T HAVE TO FIGURE SOMETHING ELSE OUT.



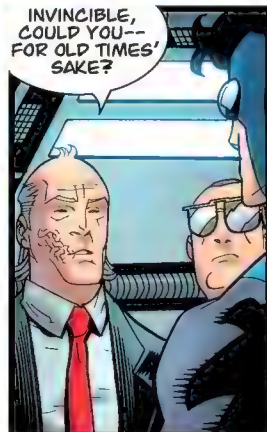
I GET WHAT YOU'RE SAYING, KILLING IS **ALMOST NEVER** JUSTIFIED. OTHERWISE, I'M JUST LIKE ALL THE OTHER VILTRUMITES. YOU KNOW I DON'T WANT THAT.

THESE LAST FEW MONTHS HAVE BEEN HARD ON ME-- IT'S GOT ME ALL TURNED AROUND. I'LL BE THE FIRST TO ADMIT I LOST MY WAY.

THANK YOU FOR ADMITTING THAT. LOOK, I KNOW THIS ISN'T GOING TO REPAIR OUR RELATIONSHIP OVERNIGHT, BUT IF--



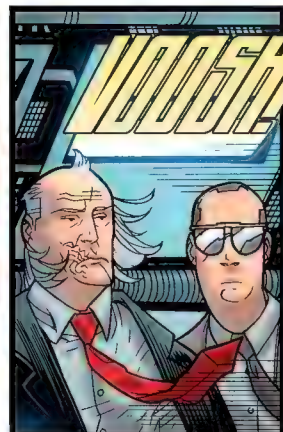
WE'VE GOT A SITUATION IN NEW YORK. LOOKS LIKE WE'RE GOING TO NEED TO SEND SOMEONE IN.



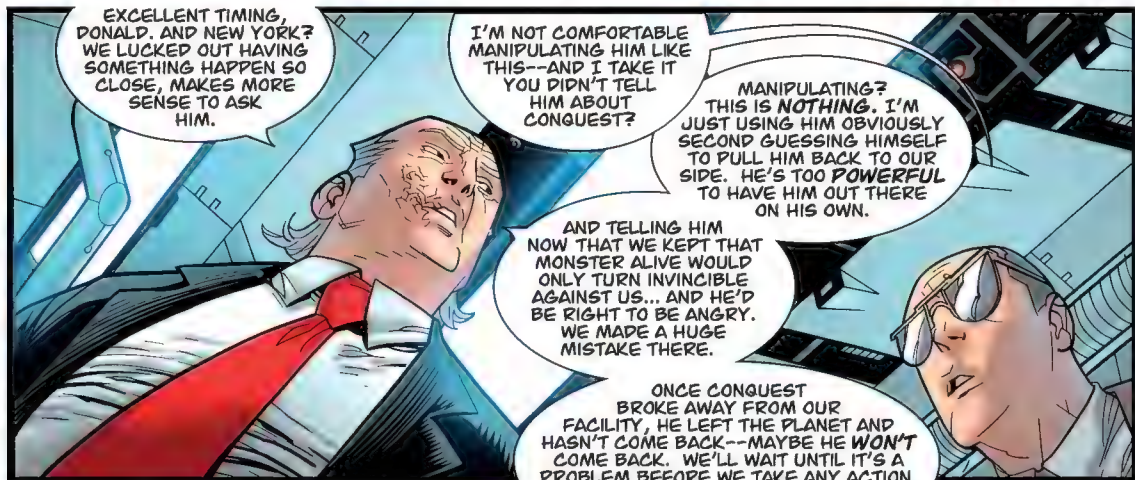
INVINCIBLE, COULD YOU-- FOR OLD TIMES' SAKE?



...



**WOOSH!**



EXCELLENT TIMING, DONALD. AND NEW YORK? WE LUCKED OUT HAVING SOMETHING HAPPEN SO CLOSE, MAKES MORE SENSE TO ASK HIM.

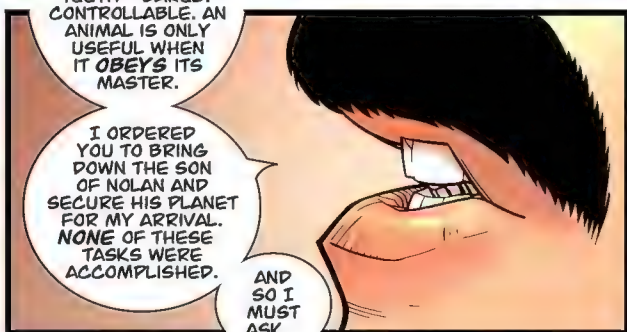
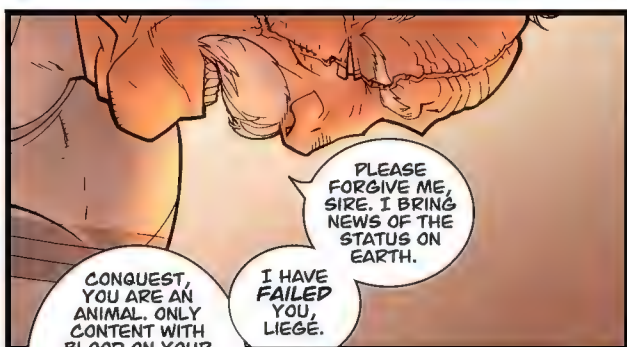
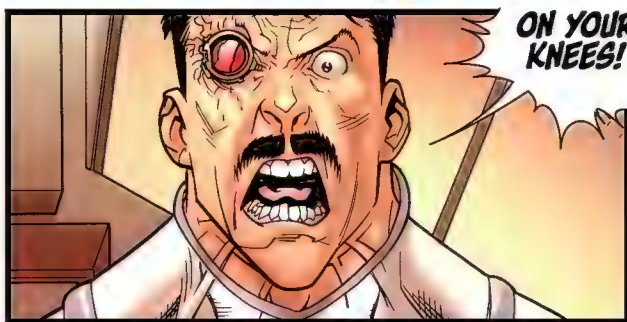
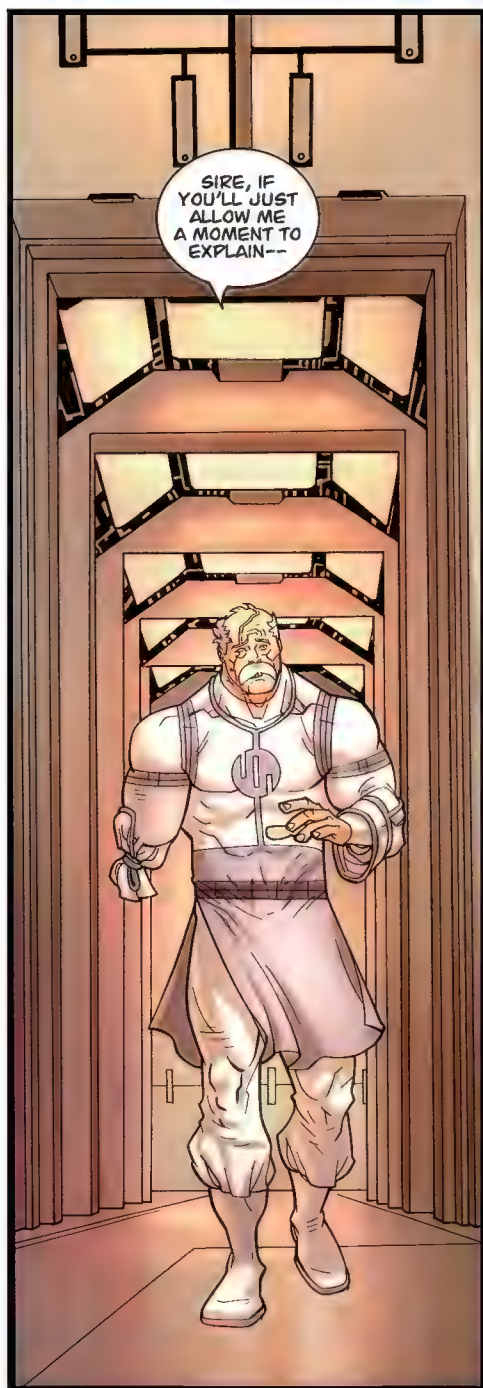
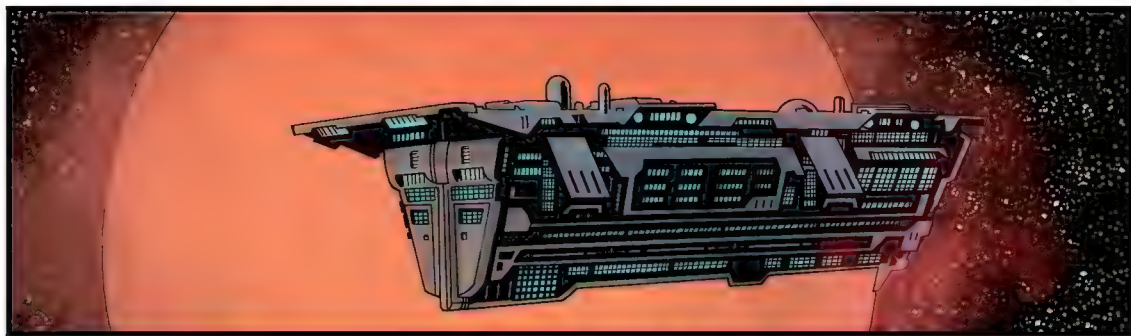
I'M NOT COMFORTABLE MANIPULATING HIM LIKE THIS--AND I TAKE IT YOU DIDN'T TELL HIM ABOUT CONQUEST?

MANIPULATING? THIS IS **NOTHING**. I'M JUST USING HIM OBVIOUSLY SECOND GUESSING HIMSELF TO PULL HIM BACK TO OUR SIDE. HE'S TOO **POWERFUL** TO HAVE HIM OUT THERE ON HIS OWN.

AND TELLING HIM NOW THAT WE KEPT THAT MONSTER ALIVE WOULD ONLY TURN INVINCIBLE AGAINST US... AND HE'D BE RIGHT TO BE ANGRY. WE MADE A HUGE MISTAKE THERE.

ONCE CONQUEST BROKE AWAY FROM OUR FACILITY, HE LEFT THE PLANET AND HASN'T COME BACK--MAYBE HE **WON'T** COME BACK. WE'LL WAIT UNTIL IT'S A PROBLEM BEFORE WE TAKE ANY ACTION.





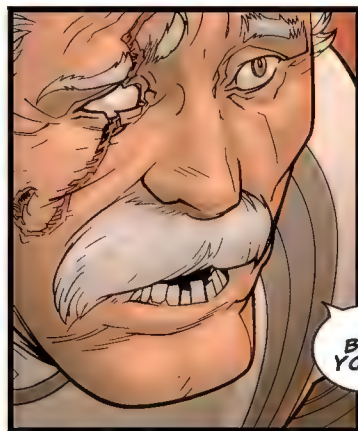




...OF WHAT  
FURTHER  
USE COULD  
YOU BE TO  
ME?

I UNDERESTIMATED  
THE BOY. I TOYED WITH  
HIM FAR TOO LONG, I  
GAVE HIM TIME TO GAIN  
AN ADVANTAGE.

I HAVE  
SERVED YOU  
WELL FOR MANY  
YEARS. PLEASE  
FORGIVE MY  
CARELESSNESS  
AND SPARE  
ME.



I  
BEG  
YOU...



WE HAVE LEARNED OF  
A TEAM SENT TO EARTH  
TO RETRIEVE NOLAN'S  
SON AND BRING HIM  
INTO DIRECT CONFLICT  
WITH US.

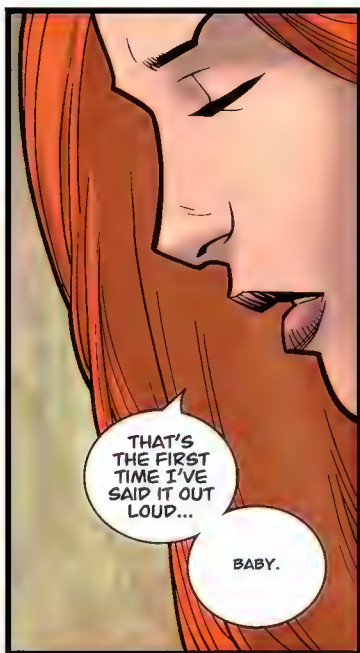
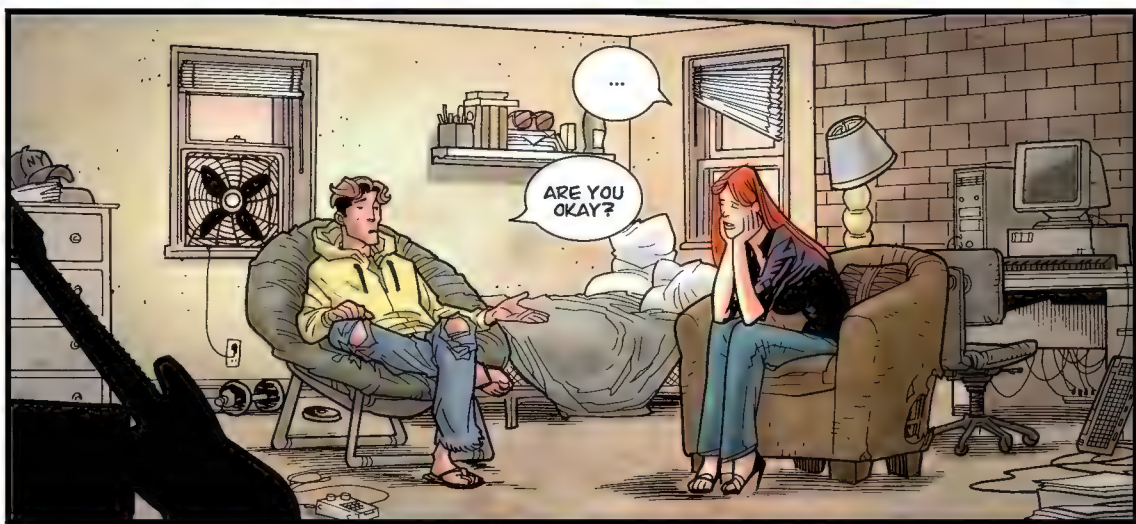


I DOUBT YOU HAVE TIME  
TO PREVENT THIS, BUT GO,  
CATCH THEM ON THEIR  
RETURN AND ENSURE NONE  
OF THEM ARE ABLE TO  
JOIN THE FIGHT.

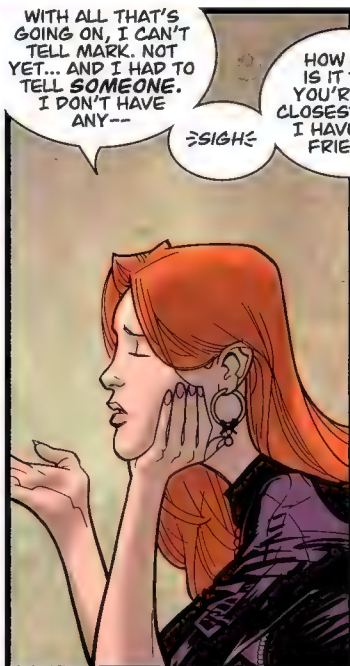
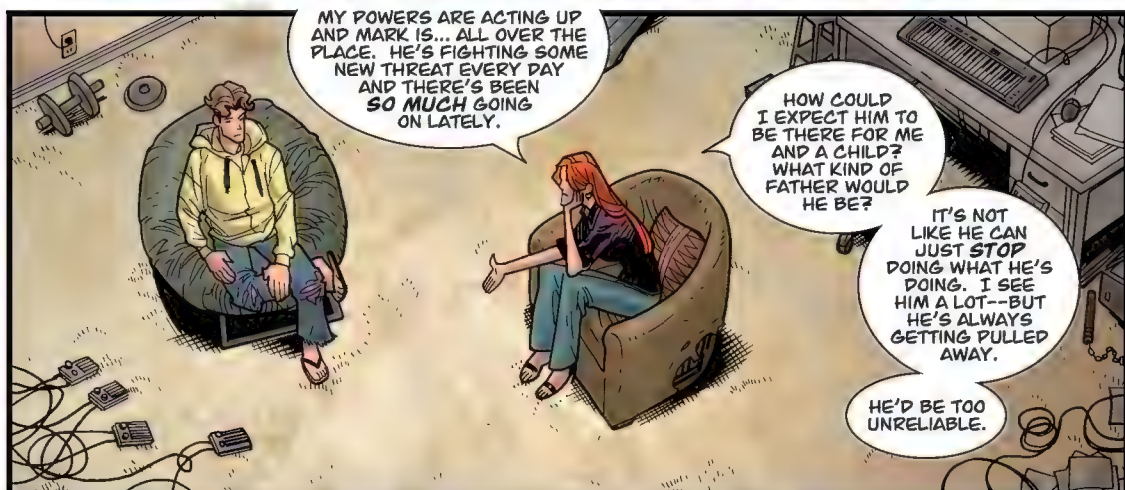
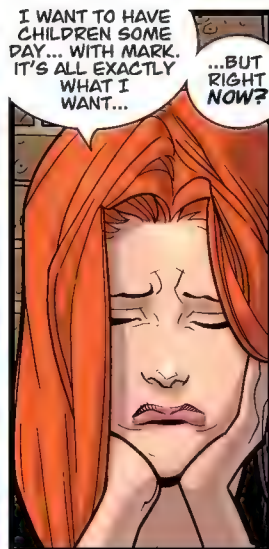
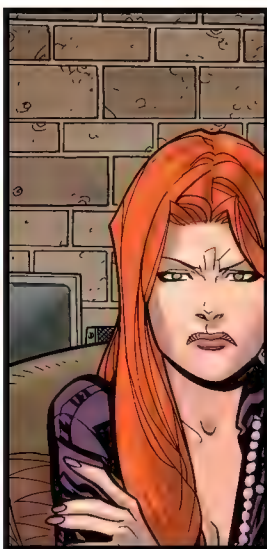
LEAVE  
NONE  
ALIVE.

DO NOT  
FAIL ME  
AGAIN.

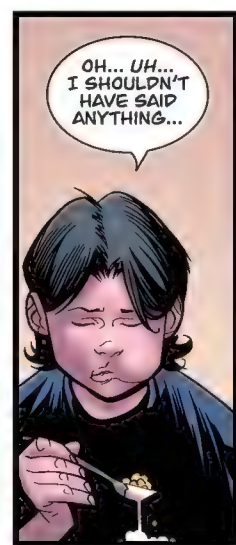
















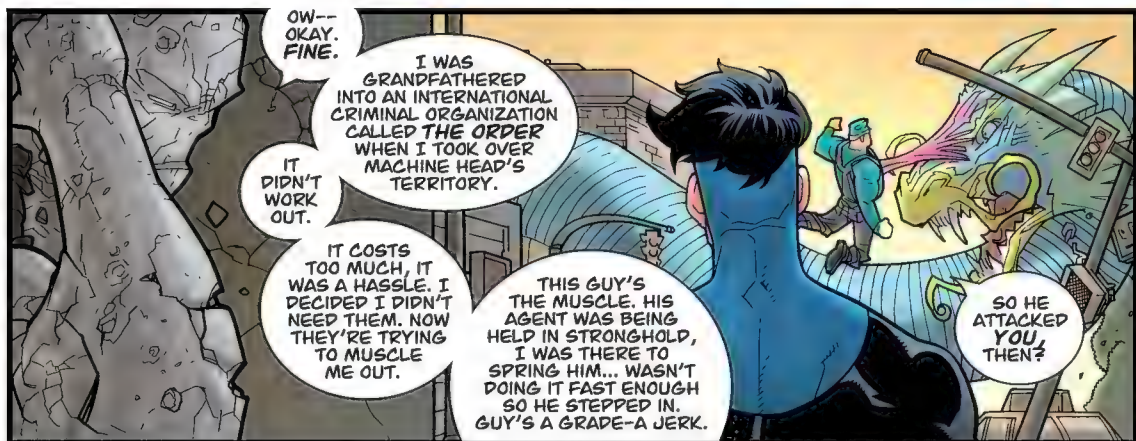
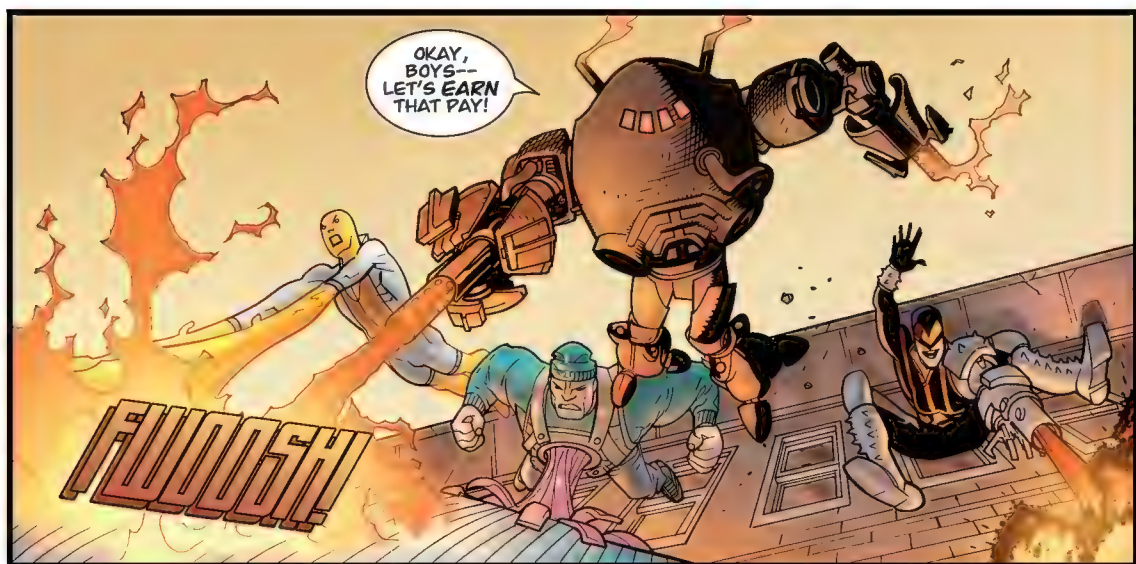
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS IS HAPPENING AGAIN!

RELAX!

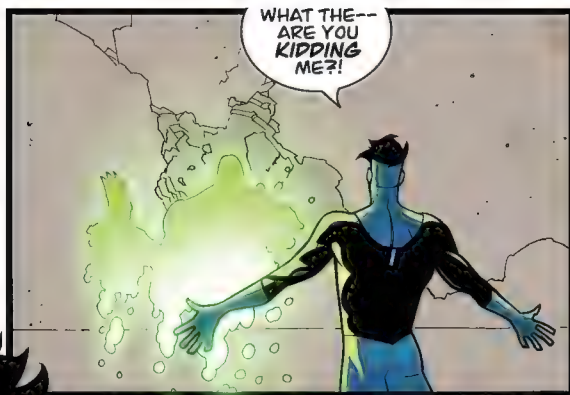
NOBODY ASKED YOU TO GET INVOLVED!

KROOOM!

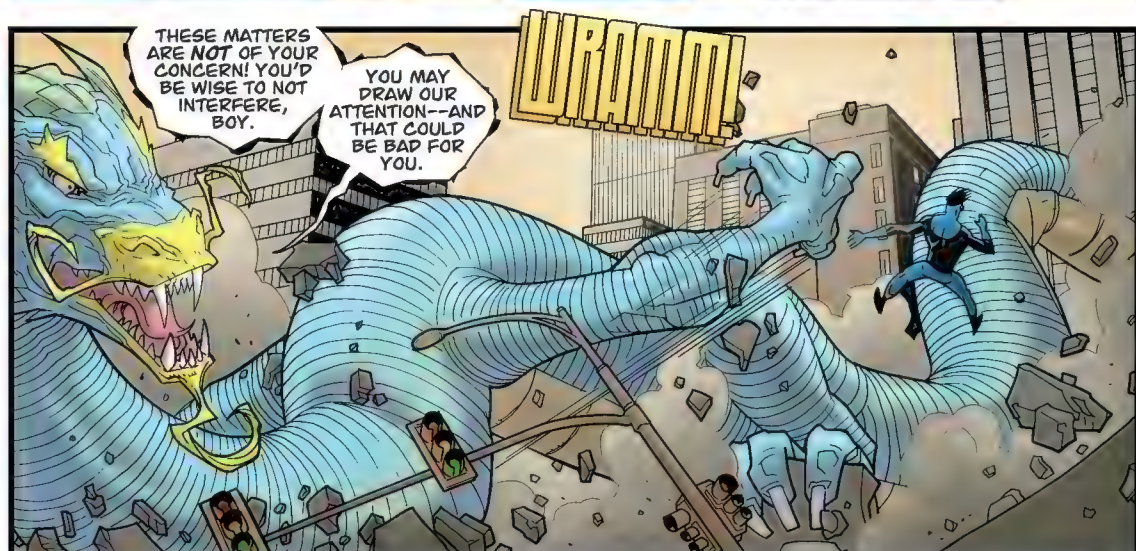
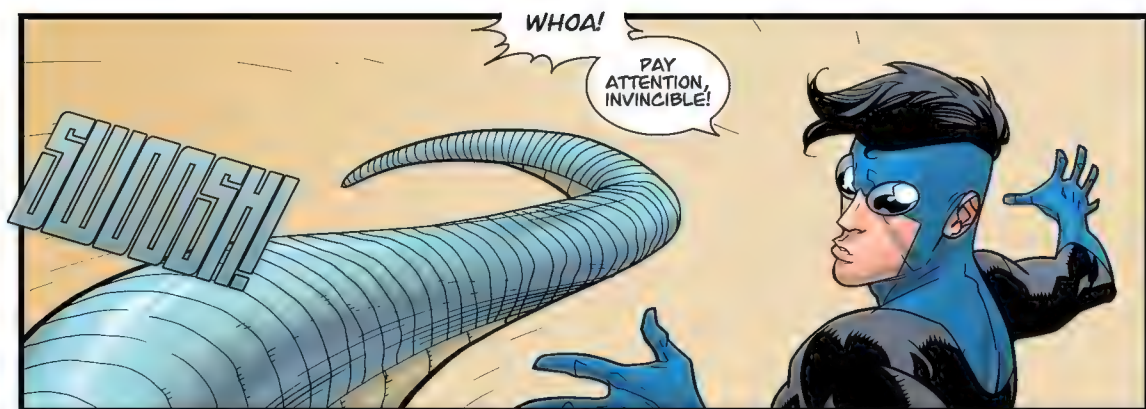




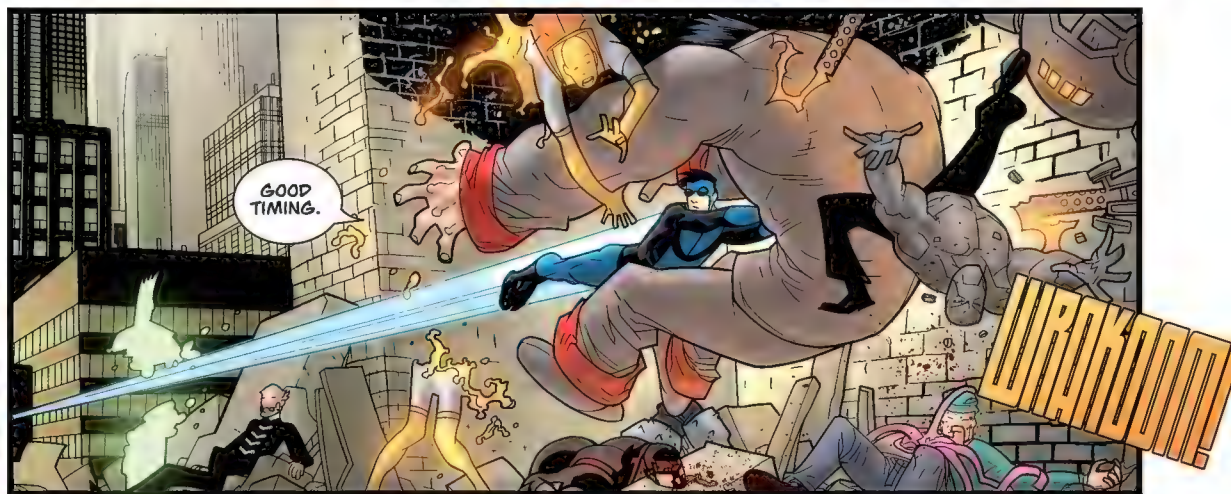




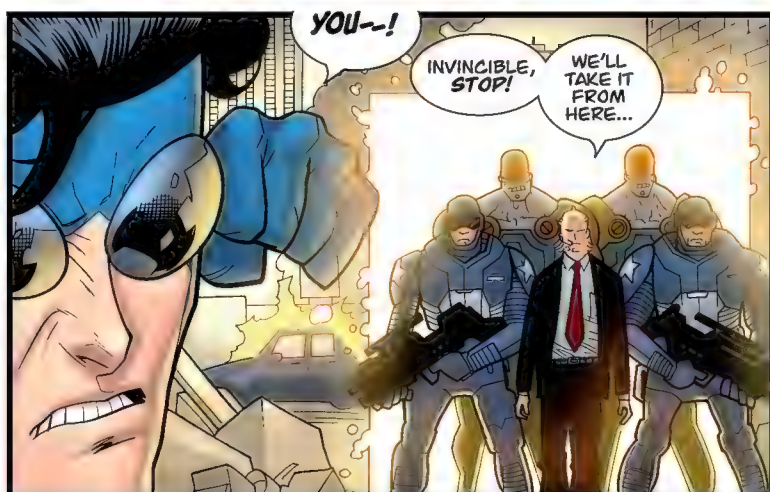




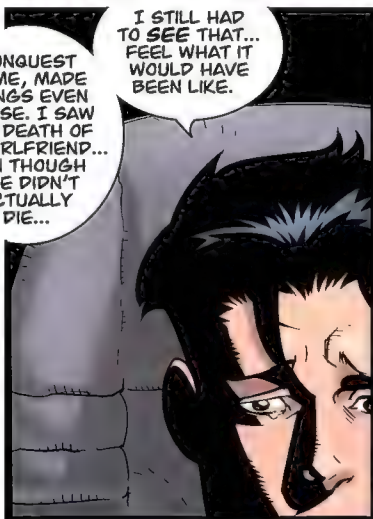














IT'S LIKE--NOW THAT I KNOW WHAT'S REALLY AT STAKE, I'M WILLING TO GO TO EXTREMES.



I KILLED A MAN.



...



I DID IT TO PREVENT MORE DEATHS... BUT IT STILL FELT SO WRONG.

AND I...



I ALMOST DID IT AGAIN, TODAY.

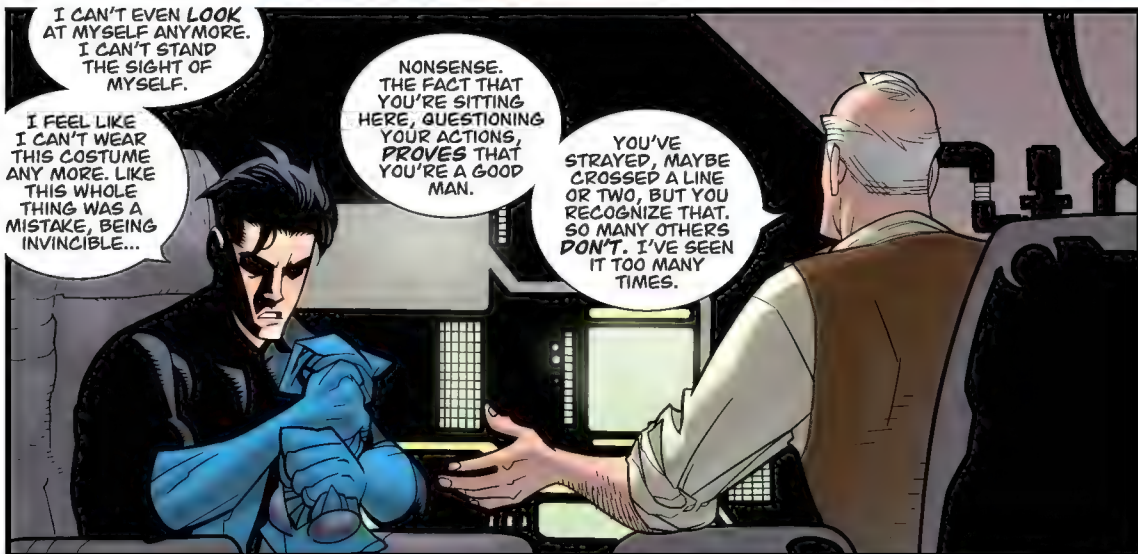
NOW THAT I'VE OPENED THAT DOOR, I DON'T KNOW IF I CAN CLOSE IT. MY TEMPER GETS THE BEST OF ME...



...IT'S HARD TO HOLD BACK.

I CAN'T EVEN LOOK AT MYSELF ANYMORE. I CAN'T STAND THE SIGHT OF MYSELF.

I FEEL LIKE I CAN'T WEAR THIS COSTUME ANY MORE. LIKE THIS WHOLE THING WAS A MISTAKE, BEING INVINCIBLE...



NONSENSE. THE FACT THAT YOU'RE SITTING HERE, QUESTIONING YOUR ACTIONS, PROVES THAT YOU'RE A GOOD MAN.

YOU'VE STRAYED, MAYBE CROSSED A LINE OR TWO, BUT YOU RECOGNIZE THAT. SO MANY OTHERS DON'T. I'VE SEEN IT TOO MANY TIMES.

WHAT YOU DO COMES WITH AN ENORMOUS AMOUNT OF PRESSURE. IT WEARS ON YOU.

YOU'RE HANDLING IT BETTER THAN MOST--AND YOU'VE SEEN THE WORST THIS JOB HAS TO OFFER.



IF YOU FEEL LIKE YOU CAN'T WEAR THAT COSTUME ANYMORE... THEN DON'T WEAR THAT COSTUME ANYMORE.



I CAN'T GO BACK IN TIME, I CAN'T UNDO WHAT YOU'VE DONE.

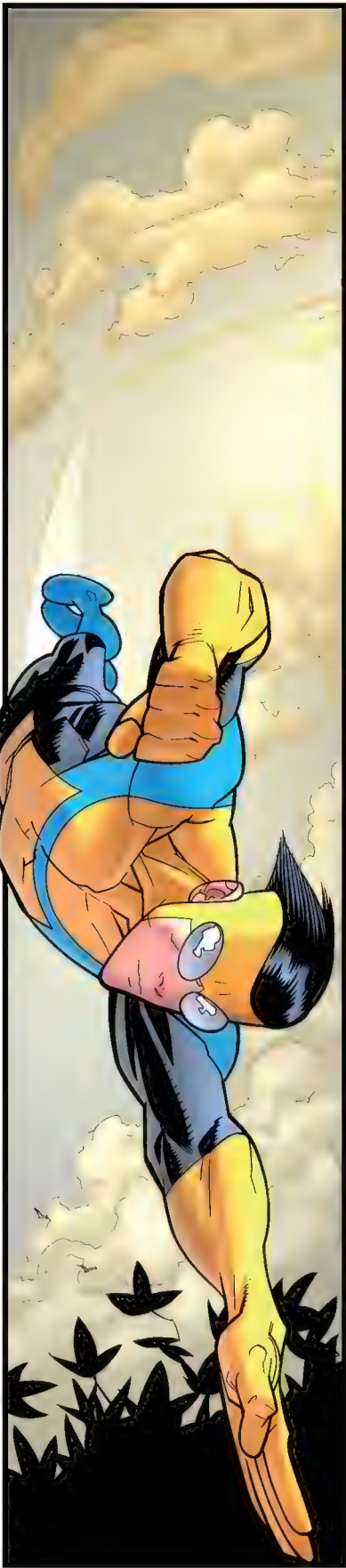
BUT IF YOU'RE READY TO GO BACK TO THE MAN YOU WERE, IF THAT'S REALLY WHO YOU WANT TO BE... I CAN MAKE SURE YOU LOOK THE PART.











I WAS WORRIED, THEN I SAW YOU ON THE NEWS. THOUGHT YOU'D BE HOME SOON SO I CAME UP HERE.

I DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE IN THE MARKET FOR A COSTUME CHANGE.

YEAH. I WENT TO SEE ART.

WE TALKED ABOUT MY RECENT MISSTEPS, HOW MUCH I'D LIKE TO GO BACK A FEW STEPS, FOR ART THAT MEANT A COSTUME CHANGE.

YOU KNOW HOW HE IS.

YOU DON'T HAVE THE SNOT BEATEN OUT OF YOU... SO I ASSUME YOUR "TALK" WITH CECIL WENT FINE.

IT DID.

IT WAS A JUSTIFIED LECTURE. HE'S WORRIED ABOUT MY RECENT ACTIONS, WHAT IT COULD MEAN FOR ME.

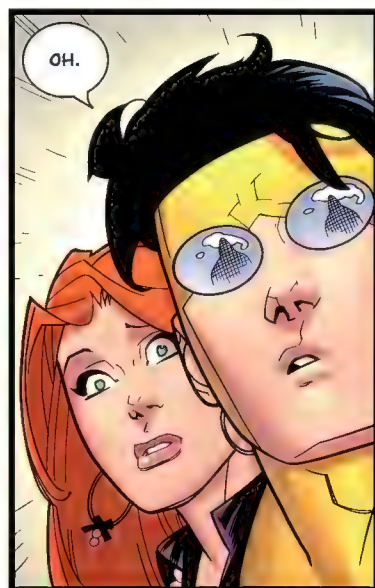
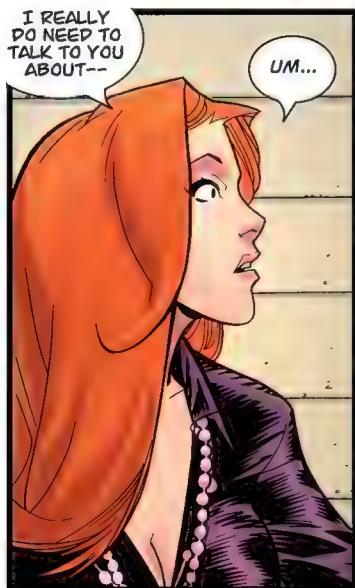
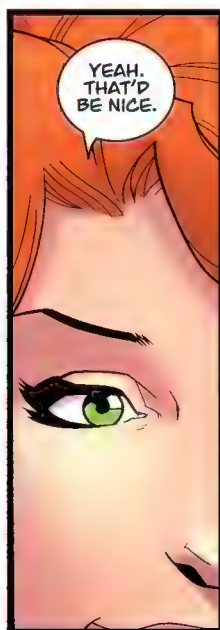
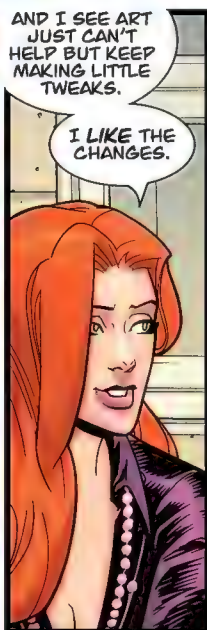
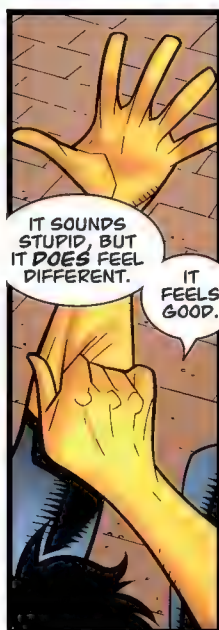
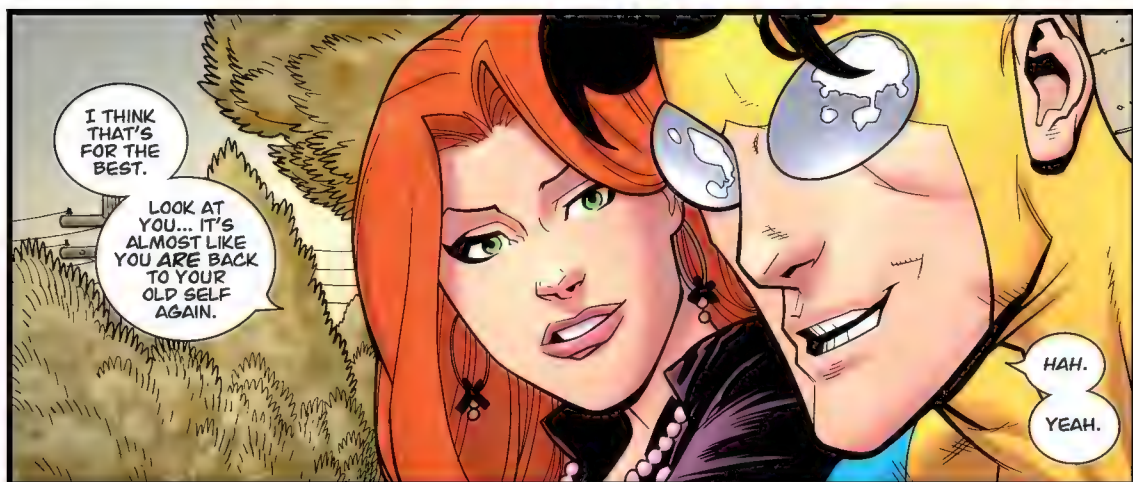
WHAT WE WERE TALKING ABOUT WHEN HE SHOWED UP.

AND?

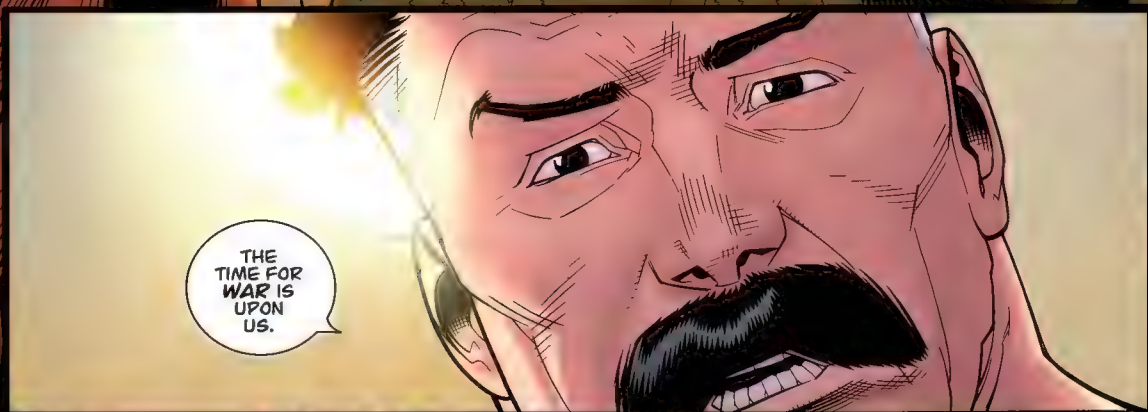
I'M DONE WITH KILLING-- IT'S TOO EASY, IT CHANGES THINGS. I'M JUST NOT CONVINCED IT'S THE ANSWER ANYMORE.

EVEN IF IT WOULD PREVENT FUTURE ATTACKS... IT SEEMS TO ALSO POTENTIALLY PREVENT GOOD THINGS.

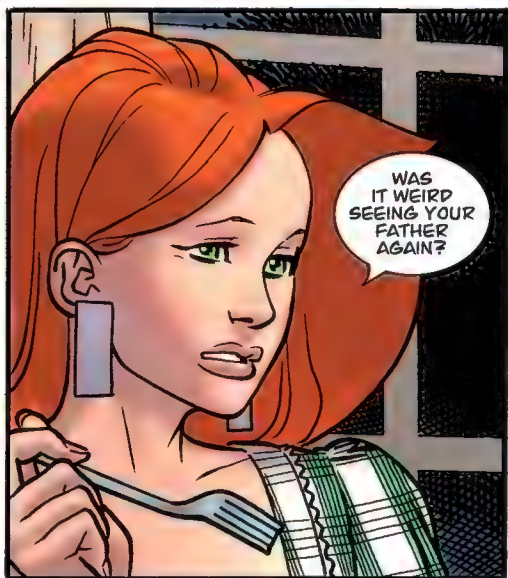
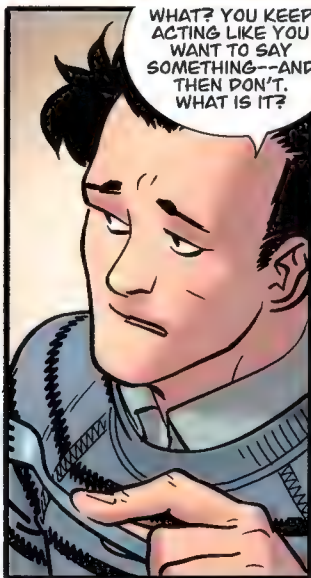
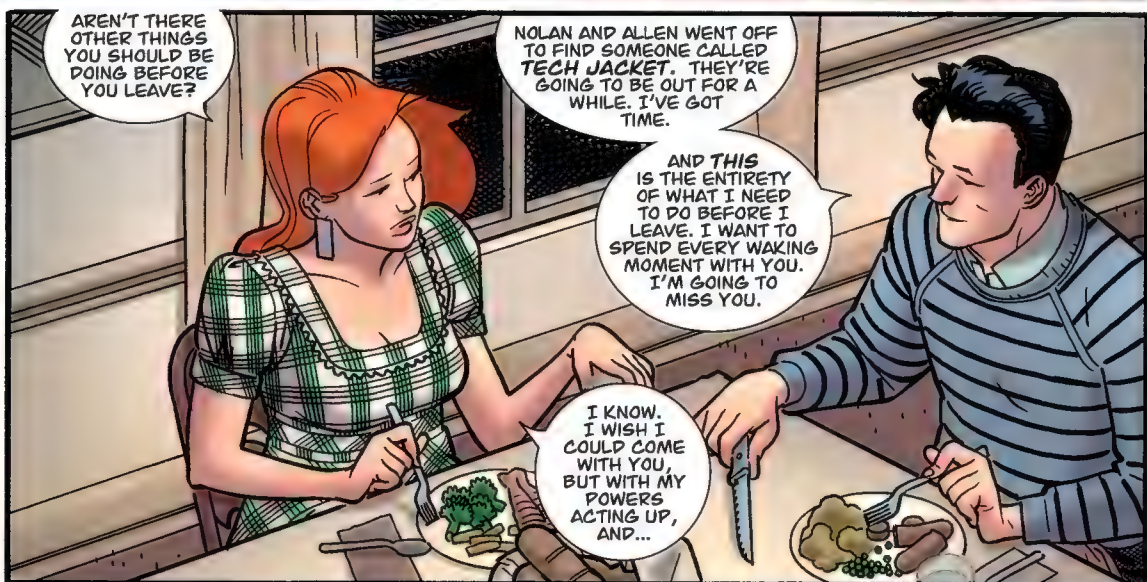
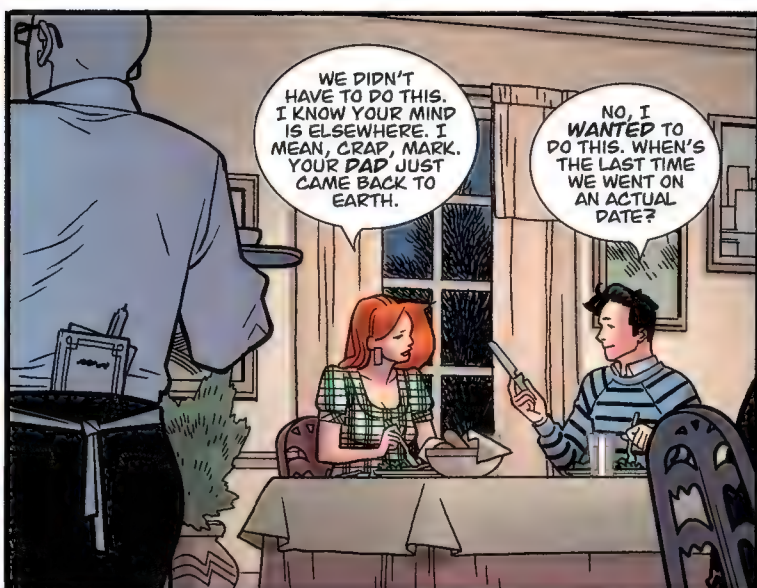

















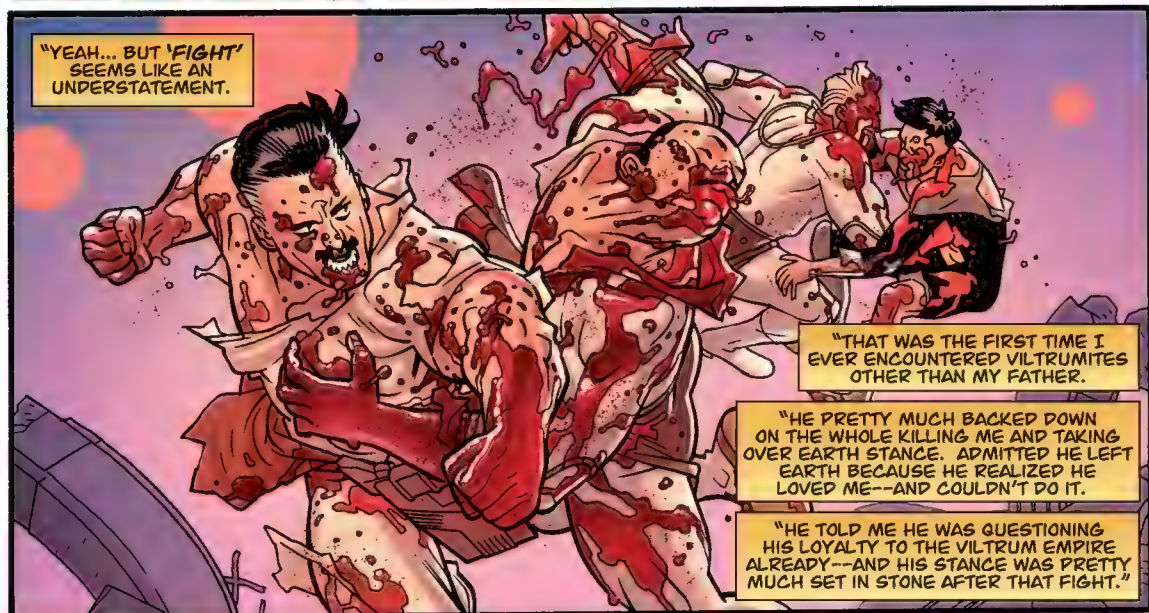
"YOU MEAN  
BECAUSE HE  
TRIED TO KILL  
ME ONCE?"

"OR IS IT THE FACT  
THAT BEFORE DOING  
SO, HE REVEALED TO  
ME AFTER BEING A  
COMPLETELY NORMAL,  
ALBEIT SUPERHERO  
DAD ALL MY LIFE THAT  
HE WAS ACTUALLY A  
MEMBER OF AN ALIEN  
RACE OUT TO CONQUER  
THE UNIVERSE AND  
HE WANTED MY HELP  
TAKING OVER EARTH?"

"OR IS IT THAT HE TOLD ME  
DURING THE FIGHT THAT HE  
WAS COMPLETELY PREPARED  
TO KILL ME, WAS INDIFFERENT  
ABOUT THAT, AND CONSIDERED  
MY MOTHER TO BE LITTLE  
MORE THAN A PET?"

"OR, WELL... ALL  
OF THE ABOVE?"







OKAY, SO NOW THAT WE'RE OUT OF THERE AND CAN SPEAK FREELY--YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT I KNOW NEXT TO **NOTHING** ABOUT VILTRUMITES. IT'S THIS LOOMING THREAT THAT HANGS OVER YOUR HEAD EVERY SECOND OF EVERY DAY AND YOU NEXT TO **NEVER** TALK ABOUT IT.



CAN YOU JUST TELL ME EVERYTHING--EVEN IF YOU THINK I ALREADY KNOW SOME OF IT?



EVERYTHING I KNOW ABOUT VILTRUMITES?

THIS SHOULD TAKE TWO MINUTES.

OH, WHATEVER. YOU HAVE TO KNOW **SOMETHING** ABOUT THEM.

I'M UP TO SPEED ON EVERYTHING BETWEEN YOU AND YOUR DAD AND EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENED WITH... CONQUEST.

IT'S ALL THE **BETWEEN** STUFF THAT I'M IN THE DARK ABOUT.

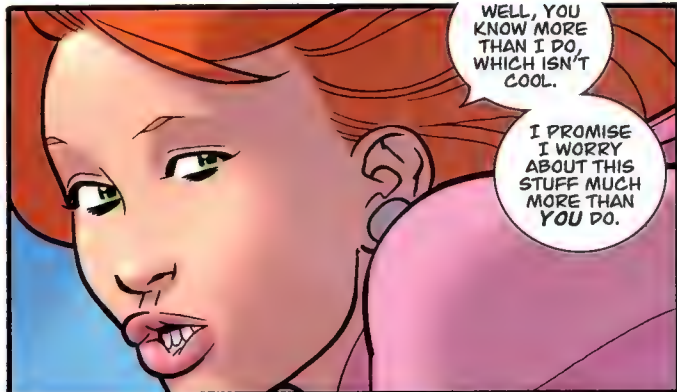
I'VE HAD BRIEF ENCOUNTERS HERE AND THERE, BUT I REALLY KNOW NEXT TO **NOTHING** ABOUT THE VILTRUM EMPIRE.

I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHO THEIR LEADER IS.



WELL, YOU KNOW MORE THAN I DO, WHICH ISN'T COOL.

I PROMISE I WORRY ABOUT THIS STUFF MUCH MORE THAN YOU DO.



I TRY NOT TO THINK ABOUT IT. IT'S TOO OVERWHELMING.

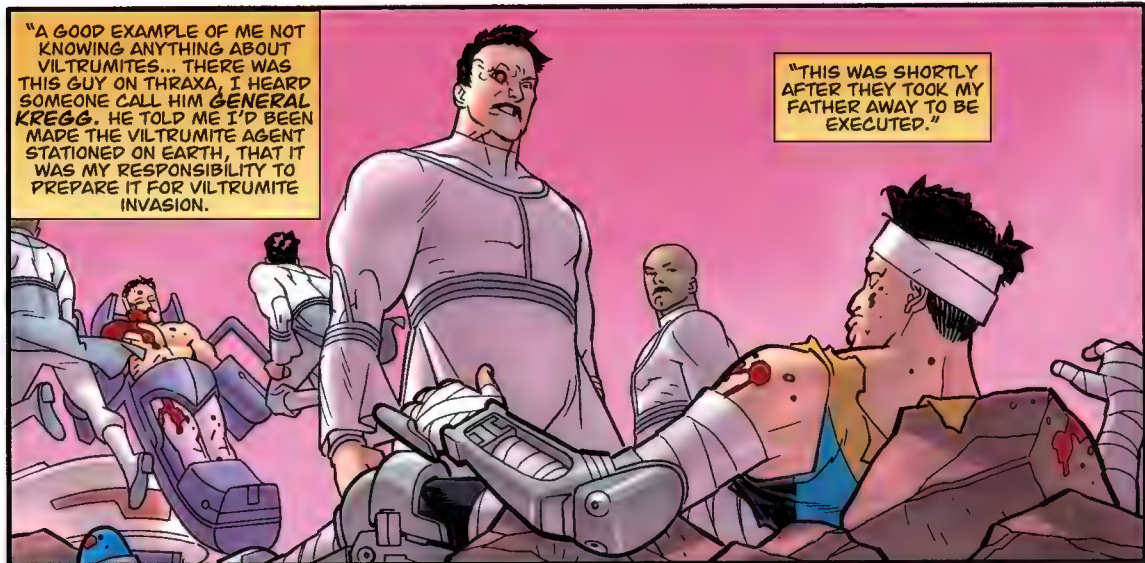
SO MUCH HAS HAPPENED. I THOUGHT MY DAD WAS DEAD. HE WAS SCHEDULED FOR EXECUTION.

I KNOW, IF IT'S TOO HARD TO TALK ABOUT, I UNDERSTAND.

NO, YOU'RE RIGHT. I DON'T WANT YOU FEELING LEFT IN THE DARK. THIS IS TOO BIG.

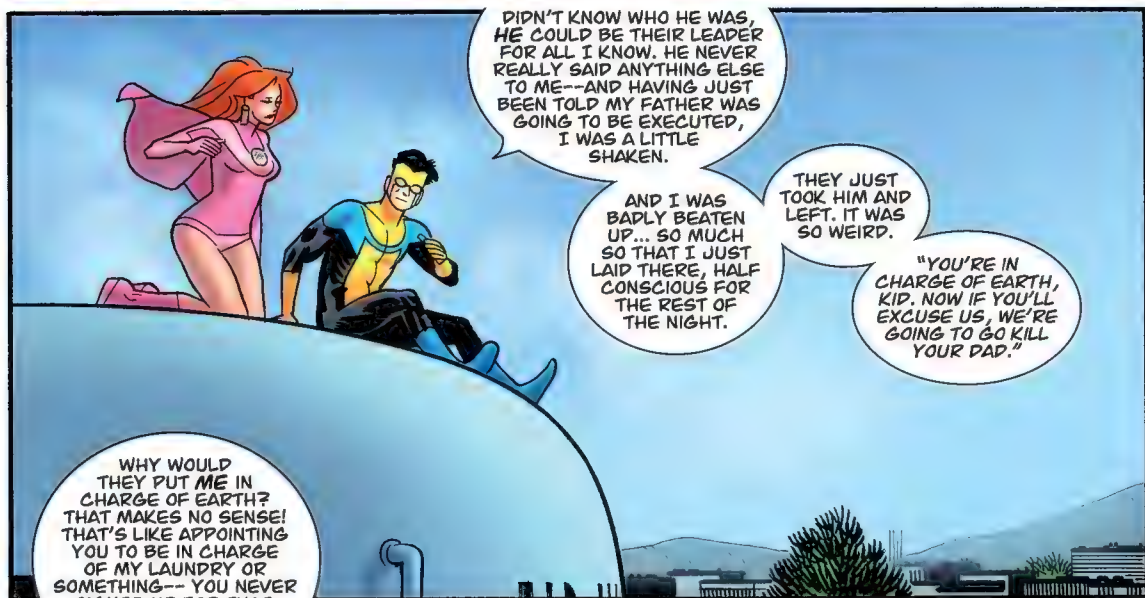






"A GOOD EXAMPLE OF ME NOT KNOWING ANYTHING ABOUT VILTRUMITES... THERE WAS THIS GUY ON THRAXA, I HEARD SOMEONE CALL HIM **GENERAL KREGG**. HE TOLD ME I'D BEEN MADE THE VILTRUMITE AGENT STATIONED ON EARTH, THAT IT WAS MY RESPONSIBILITY TO PREPARE IT FOR VILTRUMITE INVASION.

"THIS WAS SHORTLY AFTER THEY TOOK MY FATHER AWAY TO BE EXECUTED."



DIDN'T KNOW WHO HE WAS, HE COULD BE THEIR LEADER FOR ALL I KNOW. HE NEVER REALLY SAID ANYTHING ELSE TO ME--AND HAVING JUST BEEN TOLD MY FATHER WAS GOING TO BE EXECUTED, I WAS A LITTLE SHAKEN.

AND I WAS BADLY BEATEN UP... SO MUCH SO THAT I JUST LAID THERE, HALF CONSCIOUS FOR THE REST OF THE NIGHT.

THEY JUST TOOK HIM AND LEFT. IT WAS SO WEIRD.

"YOU'RE IN CHARGE OF EARTH, KIP. NOW IF YOU'LL EXCUSE US, WE'RE GOING TO GO KILL YOUR DAD."

WHY WOULD THEY PUT ME IN CHARGE OF EARTH? THAT MAKES NO SENSE! THAT'S LIKE APPOINTING YOU TO BE IN CHARGE OF MY LAUNDRY OR SOMETHING-- YOU NEVER SIGNED UP FOR THAT. IT'S SOMETHING I KNOW YOU DON'T WANT TO DO.



BUT YOUR DAD'S OKAY... AND HE'S TOTALLY GONE "GOOD GUY" NOW. HE'S FIGHTING FOR THIS COALITION OF PLANETS THING?

HIS SPINE WAS BROKEN ON THRAXA. THERE'S SOME CREEPY VILTRUMITE LAW WHERE YOU CAN'T BE EXECUTED UNLESS YOU'RE COMPLETELY WHOLE... IN PERFECT CONDITION.

IN THE TIME IT TOOK HIM TO HEAL, ALLEN FOUND HIS WAY TO HIM AND HELPED HIM ESCAPE.

THEY'RE LIKE BEST FRIENDS NOW.

THAT'S COOL.

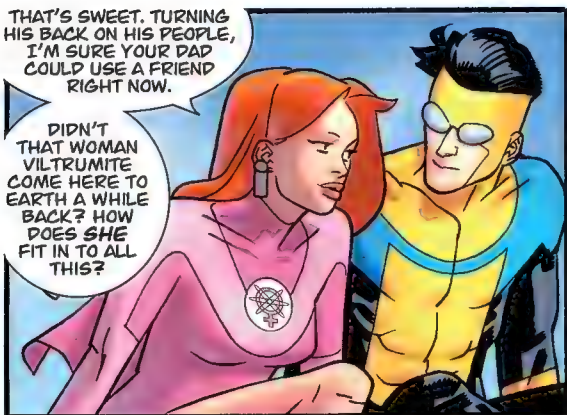
I'M CURIOUS, THOUGH? HOW DID YOUR DAD ESCAPE?

THESE ARE MY PEOPLE.



THAT'S SWEET. TURNING HIS BACK ON HIS PEOPLE, I'M SURE YOUR DAD COULD USE A FRIEND RIGHT NOW.

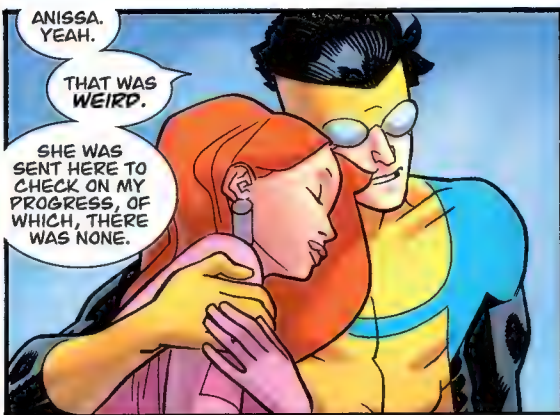
DIDN'T THAT WOMAN VILTRUMITE COME HERE TO EARTH A WHILE BACK? HOW DOES SHE FIT IN TO ALL THIS?



ANISSA. YEAH.

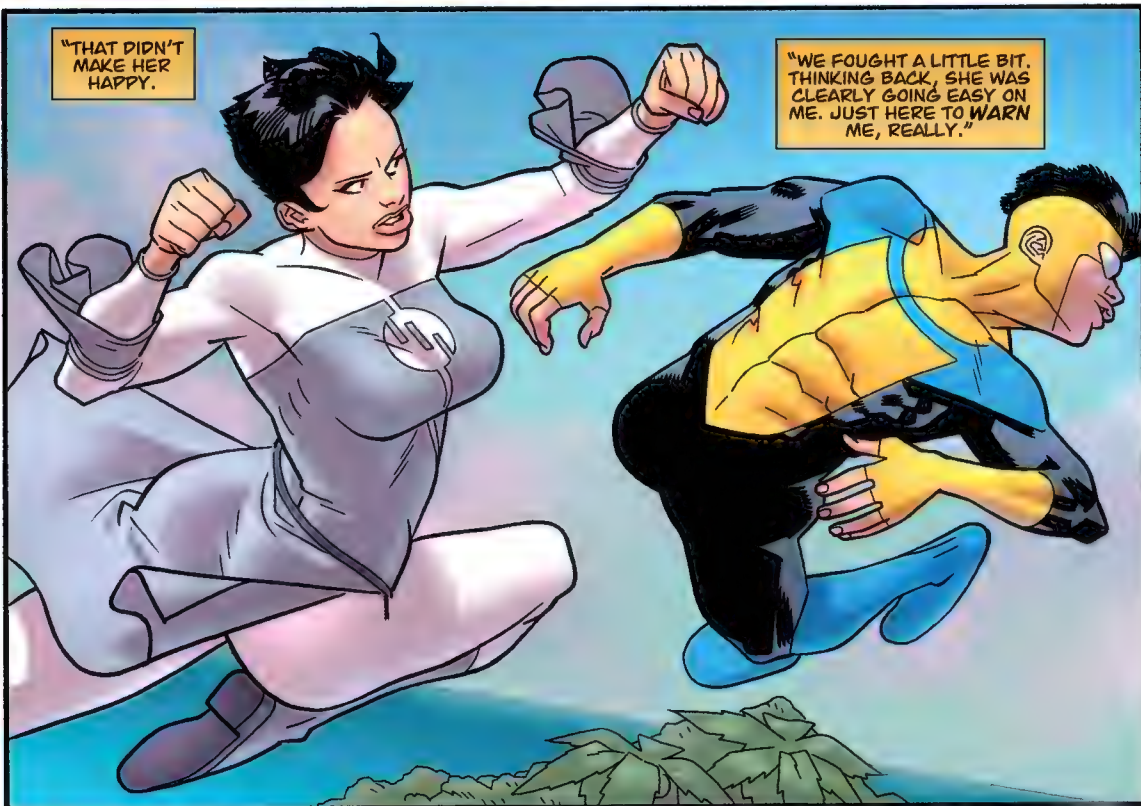
THAT WAS WEIRD.

SHE WAS SENT HERE TO CHECK ON MY PROGRESS, OF WHICH, THERE WAS NONE.



"THAT DIDN'T MAKE HER HAPPY.

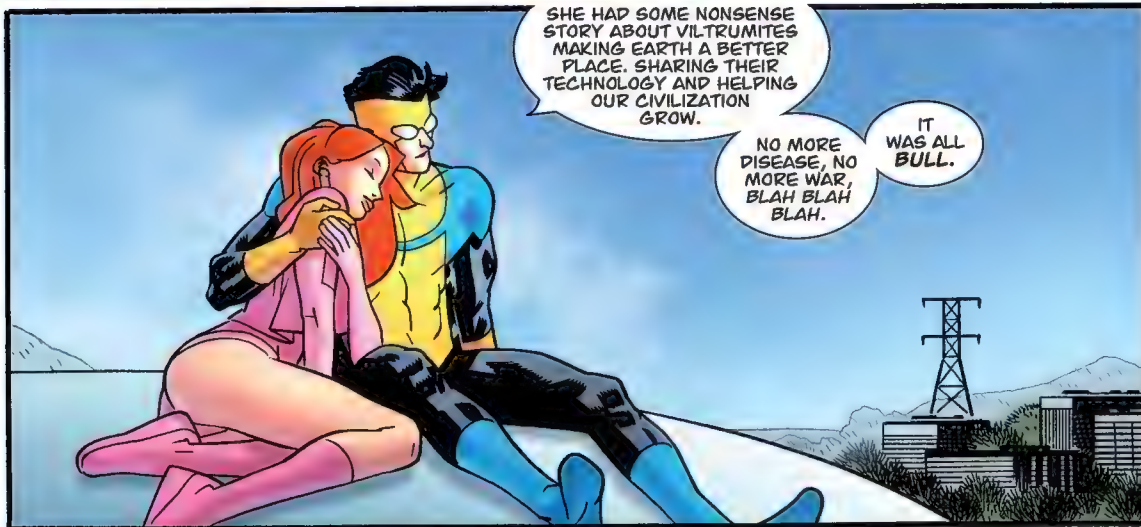
"WE FOUGHT A LITTLE BIT. THINKING BACK, SHE WAS CLEARLY GOING EASY ON ME. JUST HERE TO WARN ME, REALLY."



SHE HAD SOME NONSENSE STORY ABOUT VILTRUMITES MAKING EARTH A BETTER PLACE. SHARING THEIR TECHNOLOGY AND HELPING OUR CIVILIZATION GROW.

NO MORE DISEASE, NO MORE WAR, BLAH BLAH BLAH.

IT WAS ALL BULL.

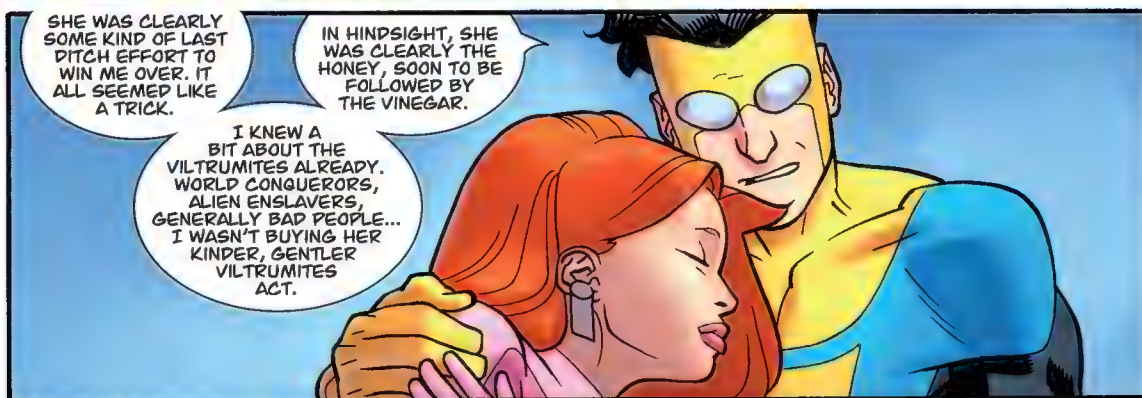






"SHE EVEN HELPED ME SAVE A BUNCH OF PEOPLE AS SOME KIND OF FORCED DISPLAY OF THE GOOD THE VILTRUMITES COULD DO.

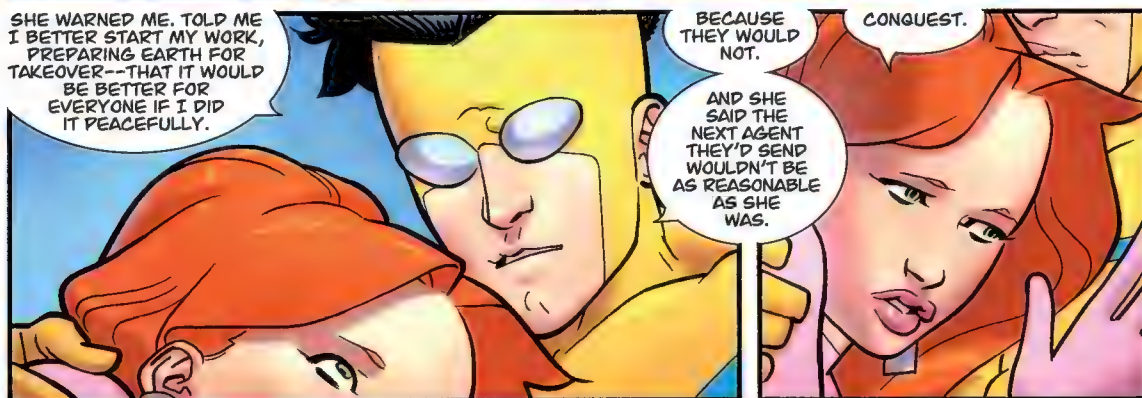
"I DIDN'T BUY IT."



SHE WAS CLEARLY SOME KIND OF LAST DITCH EFFORT TO WIN ME OVER. IT ALL SEEMED LIKE A TRICK.

IN HINDSIGHT, SHE WAS CLEARLY THE HONEY, SOON TO BE FOLLOWED BY THE VINEGAR.

I KNEW A BIT ABOUT THE VILTRUMITES ALREADY. WORLD CONQUERORS, ALIEN ENSLAVERS, GENERALLY BAD PEOPLE... I WASN'T BUYING HER KINDER, GENTLER VILTRUMITES ACT.

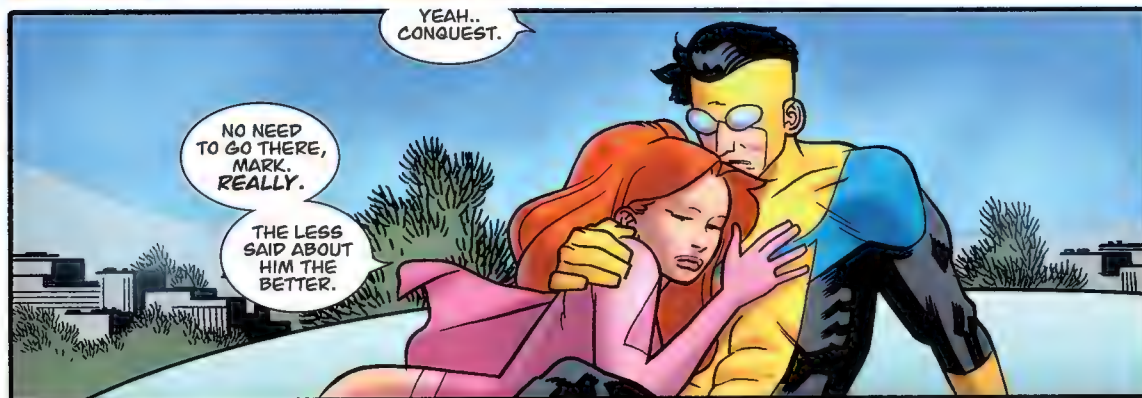


SHE WARNED ME. TOLD ME I BETTER START MY WORK, PREPARING EARTH FOR TAKEOVER--THAT IT WOULD BE BETTER FOR EVERYONE IF I DID IT PEACEFULLY.

BECAUSE THEY WOULD NOT.

CONQUEST.

AND SHE SAID THE NEXT AGENT THEY'D SEND WOULDN'T BE AS REASONABLE AS SHE WAS.



YEAH.. CONQUEST.

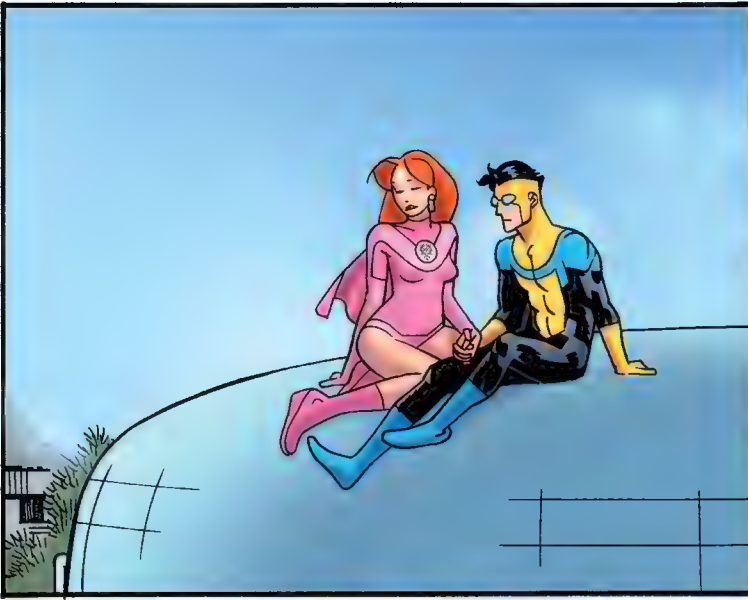
NO NEED TO GO THERE, MARK. REALLY.

THE LESS SAID ABOUT HIM THE BETTER.









MY DAD TELLS ME THEIR NUMBERS ARE ASTONISHINGLY LOW. SOME VIRUS HAS DWINDLED THEIR POPULATION DOWN TO NEXT TO NOTHING.

SO THE BATTLE, ACCORDING TO THE COALITION OF PLANETS, IS VERY WINNABLE.

MY DAD HAS BEEN WORKING WITH ALLEN THE ALIEN, GATHERING THE THINGS LISTED IN HIS BOOKS THAT CAN BE USED AGAINST THE VILTRUM EMPIRE.

HE SAYS NOW IS THE TIME TO STRIKE.

A large close-up of the man's face. He is wearing his yellow mask and has a determined expression. His eyes are visible through the mask's visor.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

A close-up of the woman's face. She has a concerned expression and is looking towards the man. Her red hair is visible.

THEY'VE SINGLEDED OUT EARTH BECAUSE OF OUR COMPATIBLE PNA... THAT'S THE RESOURCE THEY WANT FROM US. WE'RE A WAY FOR THEM TO RESTORE THEIR POPULATION.

I WAS ALWAYS GOING TO BE IN THIS BATTLE. I'M JUST GLAD MY FATHER IS ON MY SIDE.

A close-up of the man's face. He is looking towards the woman with a slight smile. His yellow mask and black hair are visible.

DO YOU TRUST HIM?

A close-up of the woman's face. She has a skeptical expression and is looking towards the man. Her red hair and pink suit are visible.

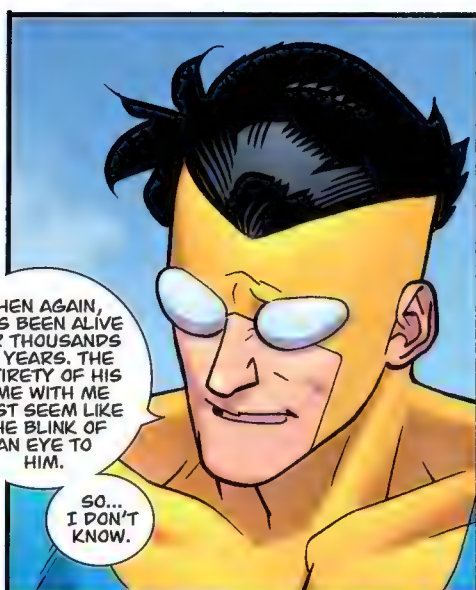




IT'S WEIRD. I'VE KNOWN HIM ALL MY LIFE TO BE THIS GOOD PERSON, **OMNI-MAN**, DEFENDER OF DEMOCRACY... AND I CAN'T CONVINCE MYSELF ALL THAT WAS AN ACT.

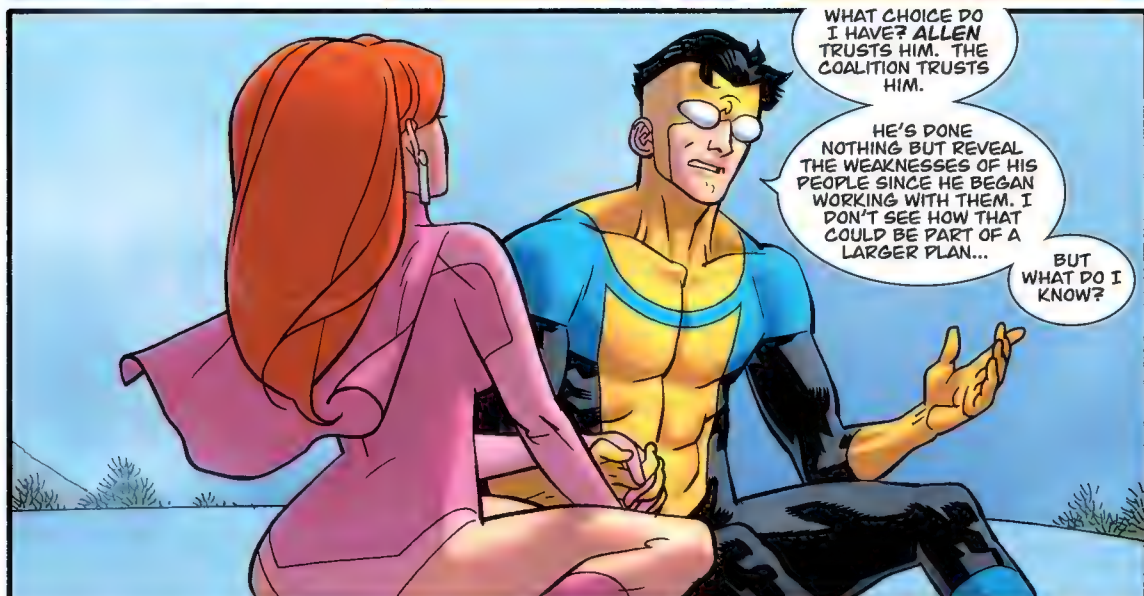
THE KINDNESS HE SHOWED ME, THE LOVE BETWEEN A FATHER AND SON, IT ALL SEEMED SO REAL, SO NORMAL. SO I BELIEVE THAT IT WAS.

THE BAD PARTS, HIM TRYING TO TAKE OVER, FIGHTING ME... IT WAS SUCH A BRIEF PERIOD. HE SEEMS BACK TO NORMAL AGAIN.



THEN AGAIN, HE'S BEEN ALIVE FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS. THE ENTIRETY OF HIS TIME WITH ME MUST SEEM LIKE THE BLINK OF AN EYE TO HIM.

SO... I DON'T KNOW.



WHAT CHOICE DO I HAVE? **ALLEN** TRUSTS HIM. THE COALITION TRUSTS HIM.

HE'S DONE NOTHING BUT REVEAL THE WEAKNESSES OF HIS PEOPLE SINCE HE BEGAN WORKING WITH THEM. I DON'T SEE HOW THAT COULD BE PART OF A LARGER PLAN...

BUT WHAT DO I KNOW?



WE'RE SUPPOSED TO LEAVE TOMORROW. I DON'T KNOW HOW LONG I'LL BE GONE AND I WON'T HAVE ANY CONTACT WITH EARTH.

BUT THIS IS SOMETHING I HAVE TO DO-- FOR THE SAKE OF THE WHOLE PLANET.

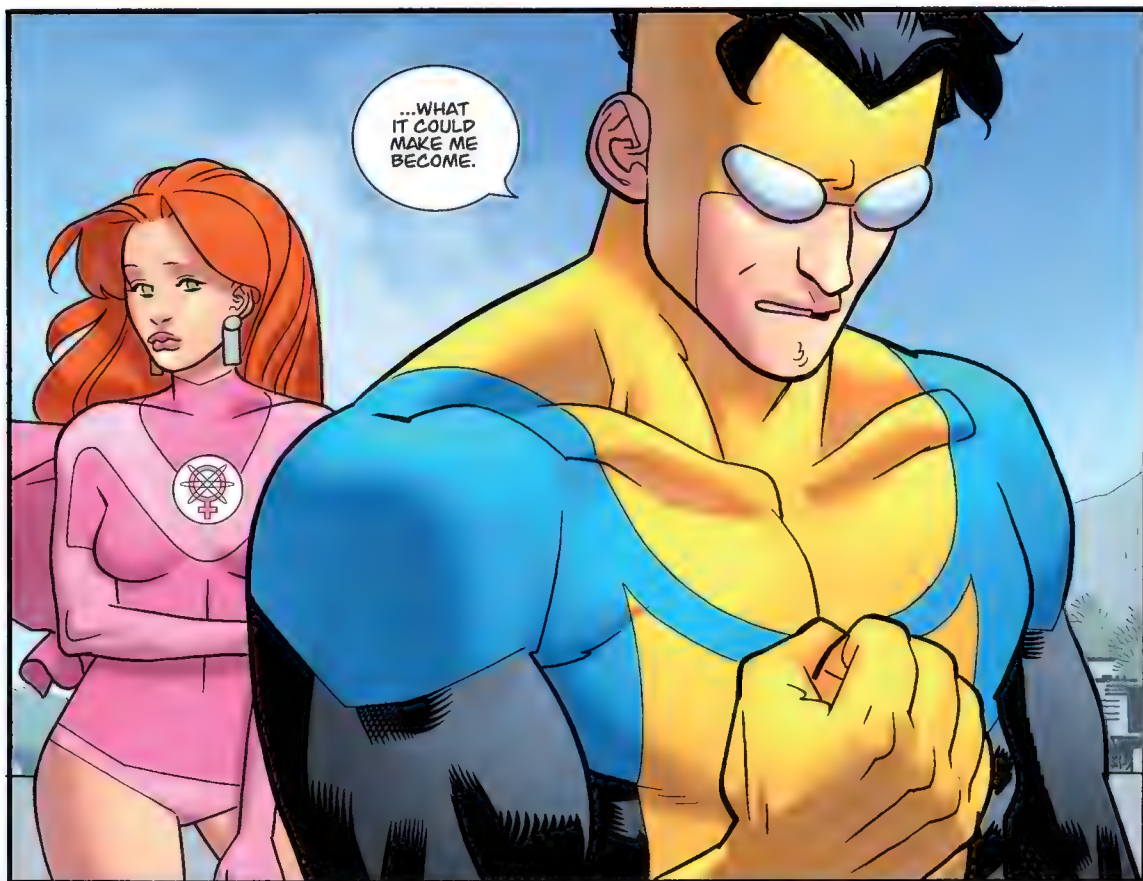


I KNOW. I UNDERSTAND.

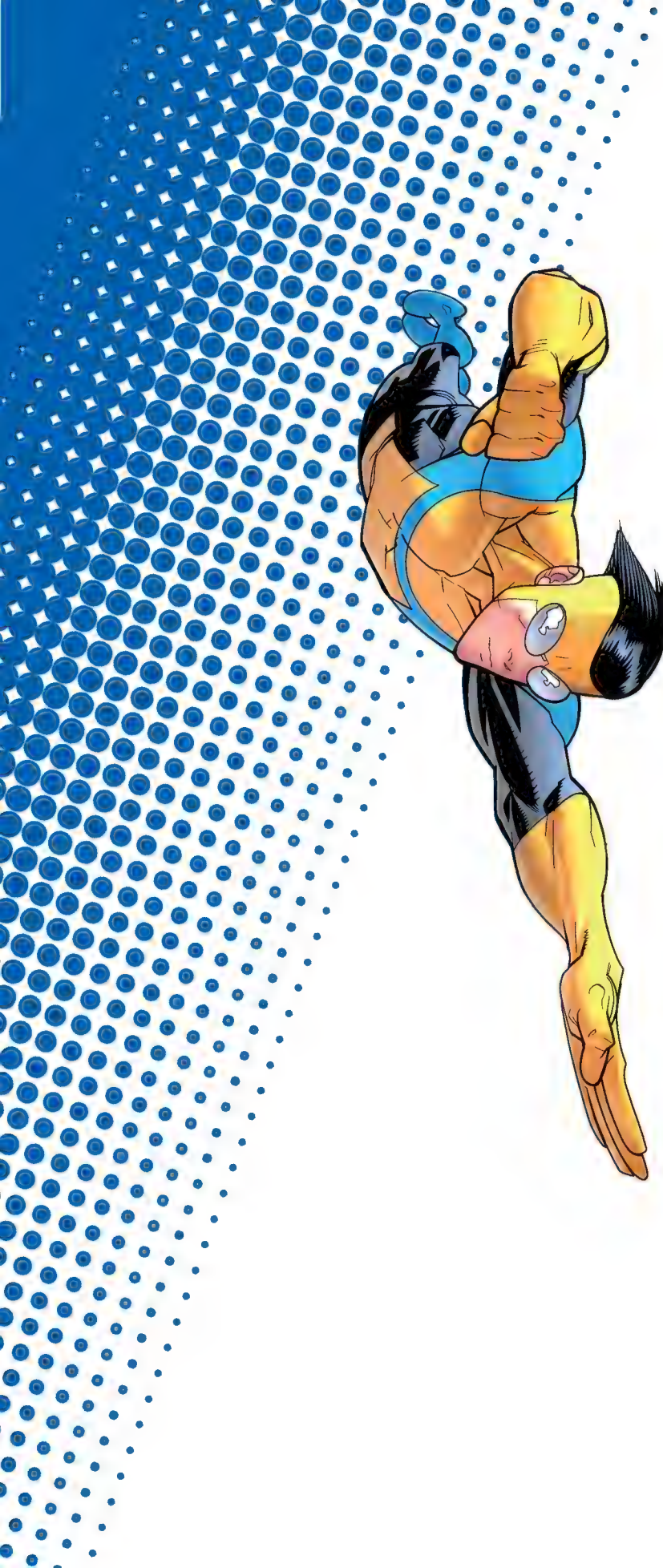
I--

I'LL HOLD DOWN THE FORT WHILE YOU'RE GONE.



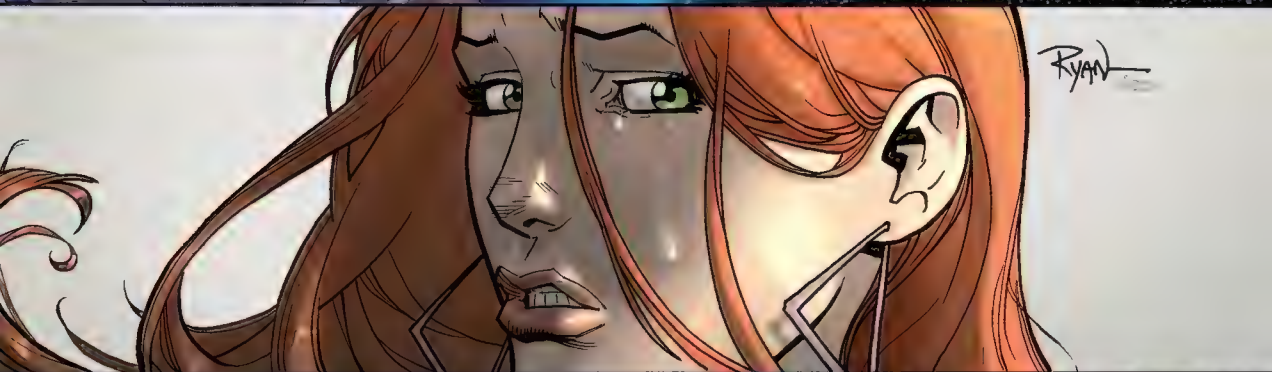








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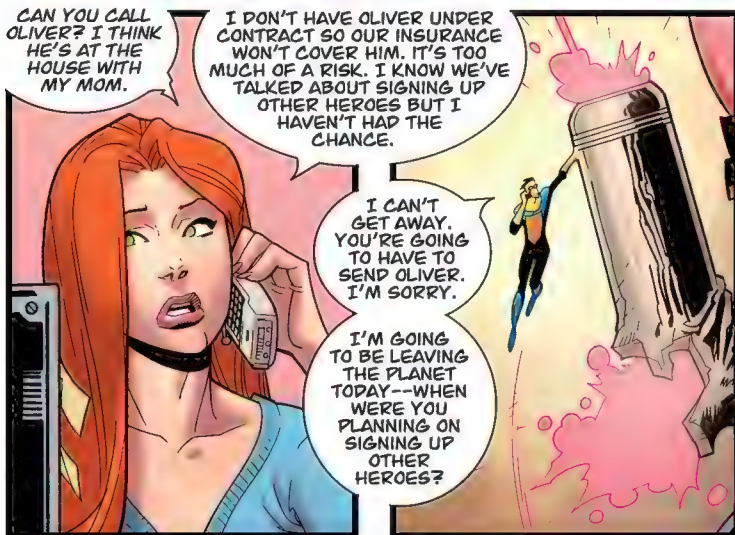




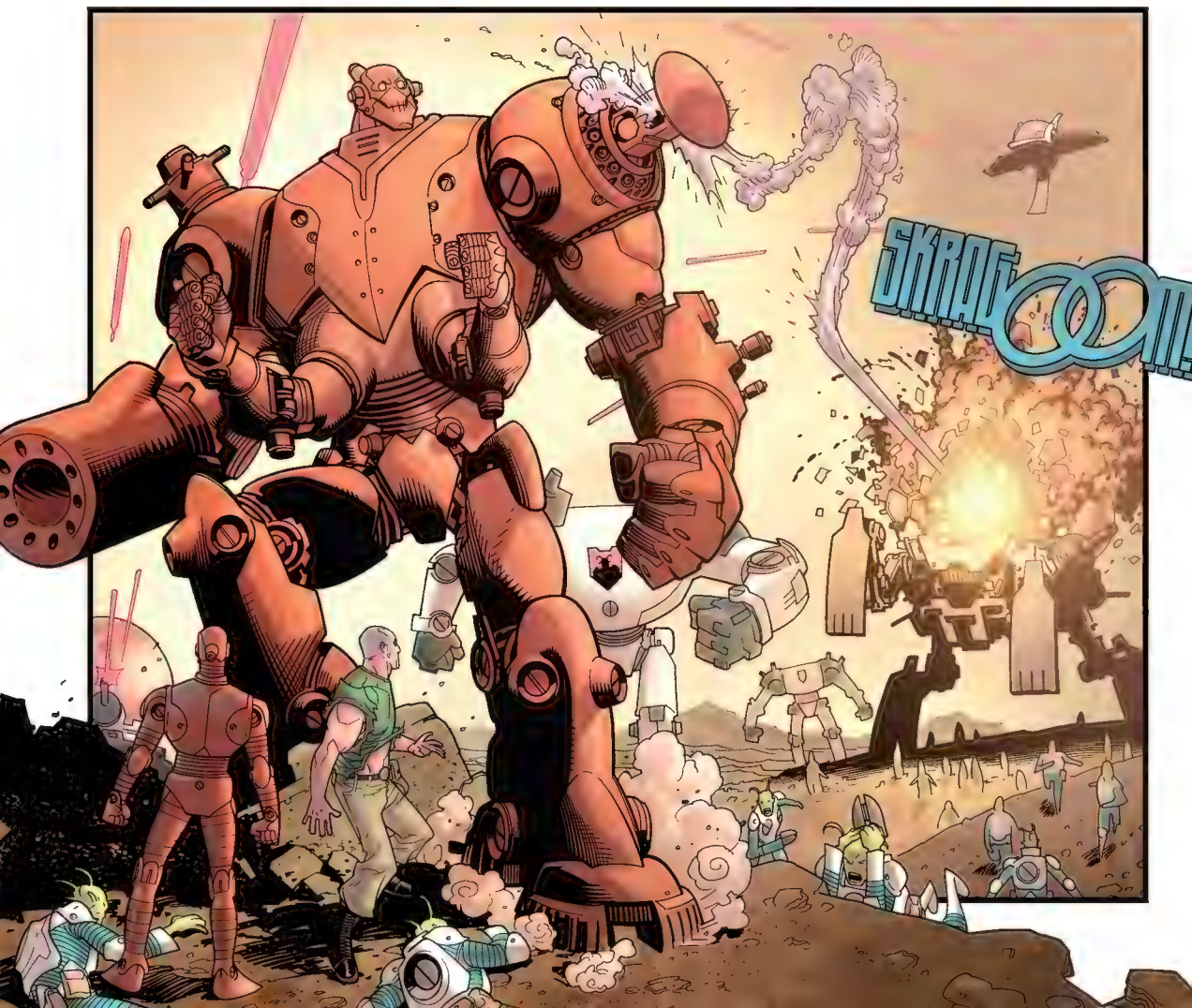
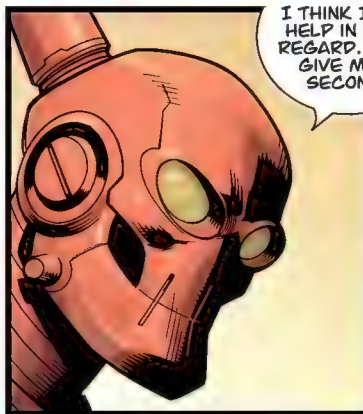
ARRE!!  
ARRE!!

YOU'RE  
KIDDING  
ME!

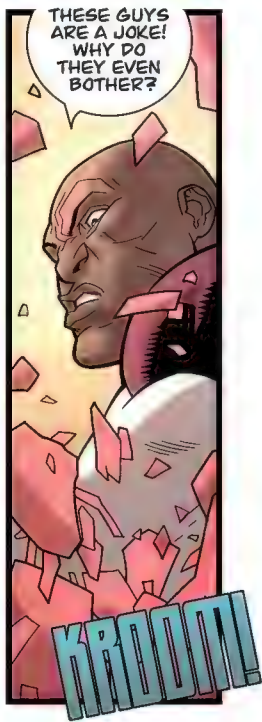
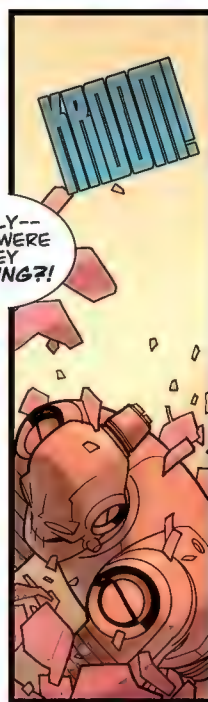
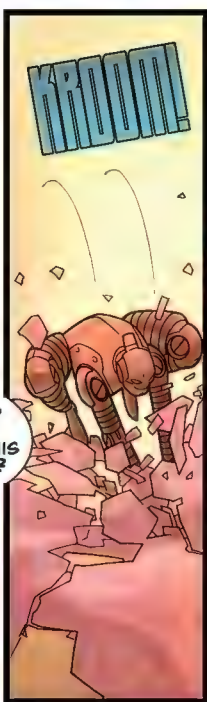
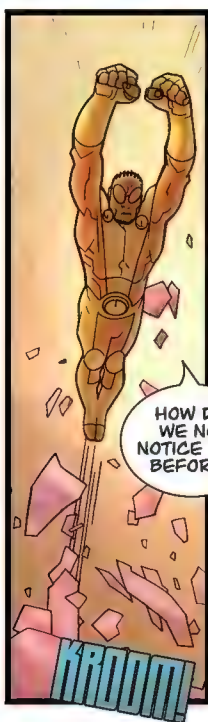
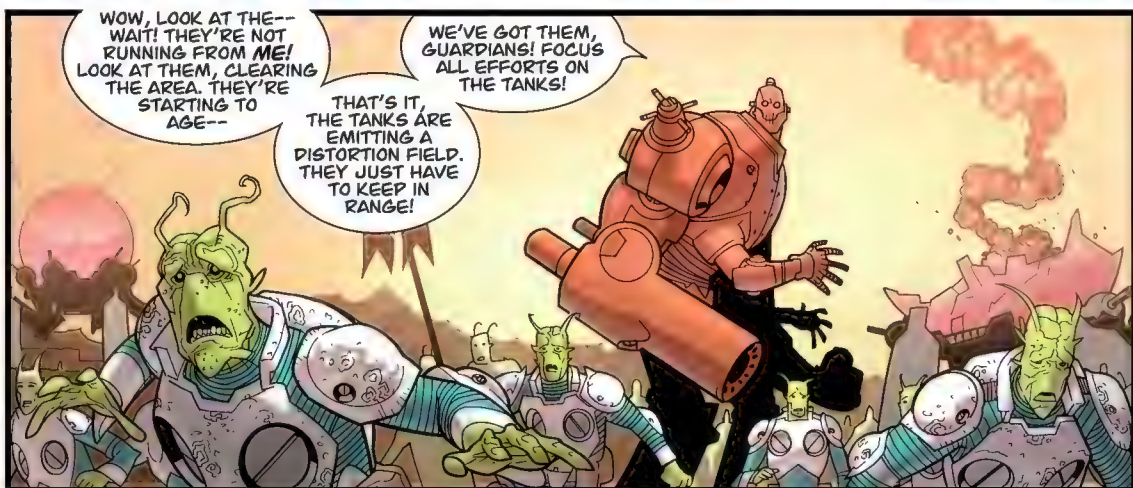
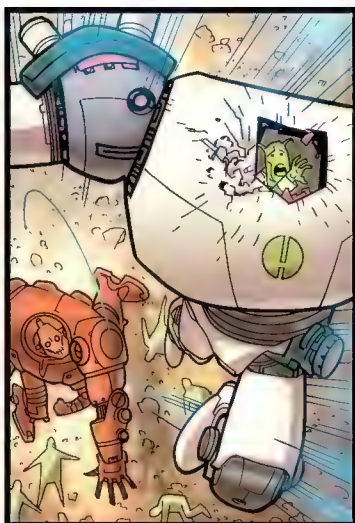




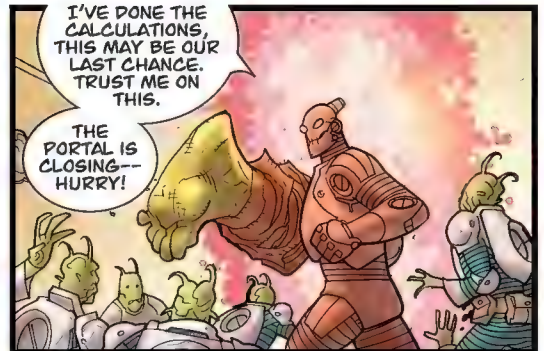
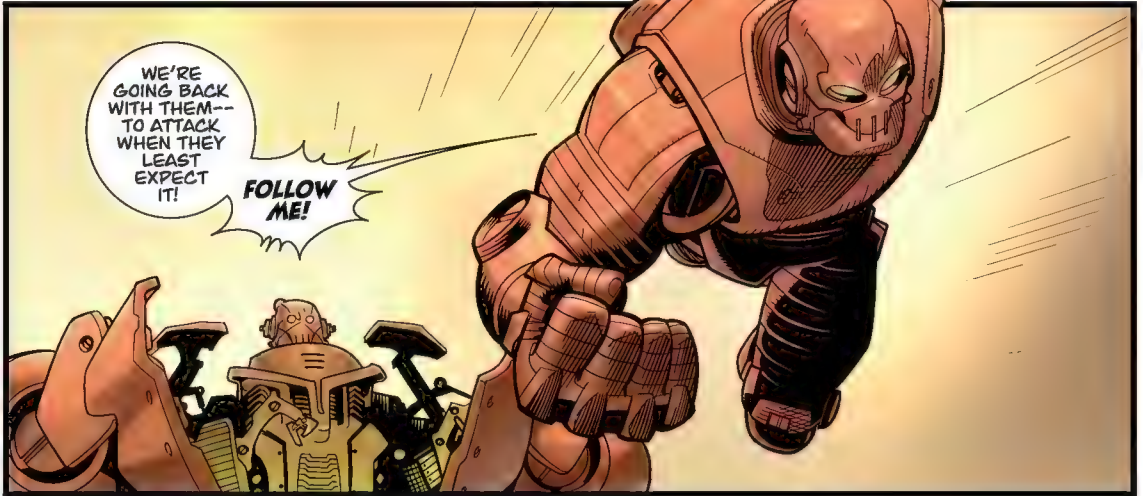
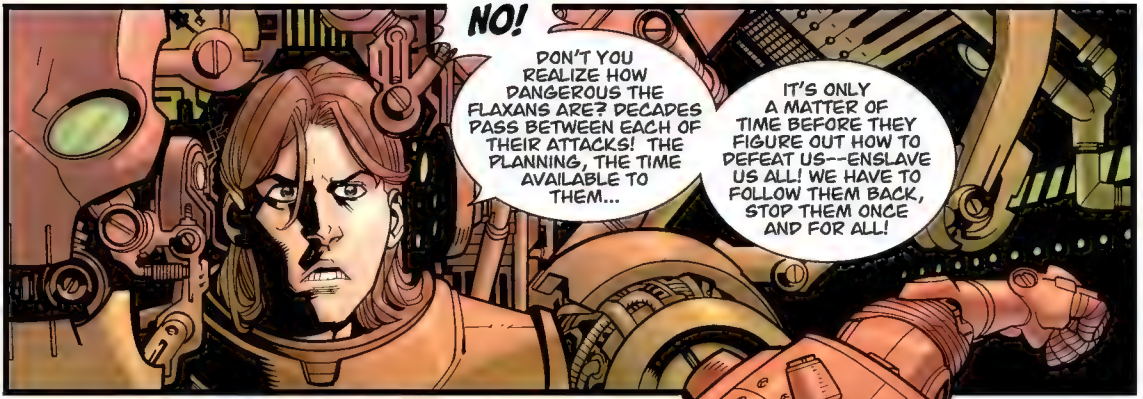




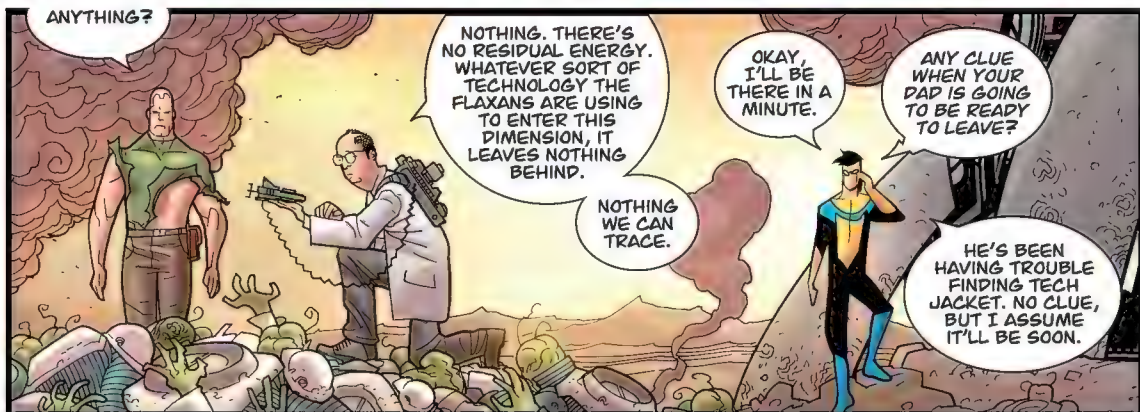
















WHAT ABOUT YOUR WIFE? YOU'RE NOT EVEN GOING TO SEE HER WHILE YOU'RE HERE?

I COULDN'T. I WOULDN'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY. I'VE PUT HER THROUGH SO MUCH... LET'S JUST FIND THIS BOY AND GET OFF THIS PLANET.

TOO MANY BAD MEMORIES.

WELL, I CERTAINLY DIDN'T THINK IT WOULD TAKE THIS LONG TO FIND THIS **TECH JACKET** EITHER. HE AND HIS FAMILY JUST DISAPPEARED AT SOME POINT A WHILE BACK.

I WAS ABLE TO DISCOVER THIS HOUSE, OWNED BY THE BOY'S GRANDFATHER. MAYBE HE'LL KNOW WHERE THEY ARE.

THIS IS OUR LAST CHANCE, IF WE DON'T FIND HIM HERE--I DON'T CARE HOW POWERFUL THE GELDARIANS SAID HE WAS--WE'RE LEAVING WITHOUT HIM.

UNDERSTOOD.

YOU LOOKING FOR THE THOMPSON BOY? CALLS HIMSELF **TECH** JACKET? WHAT AM I SAYING--OF COURSE YOU ARE.

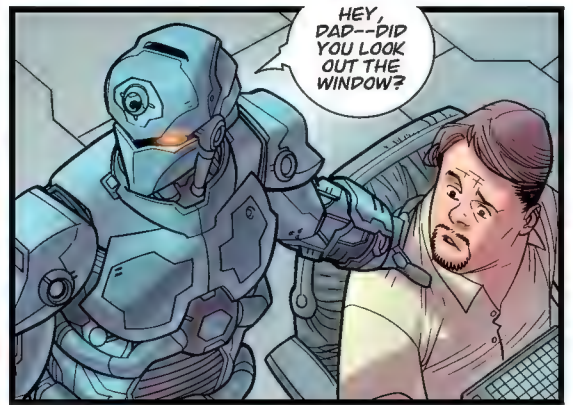
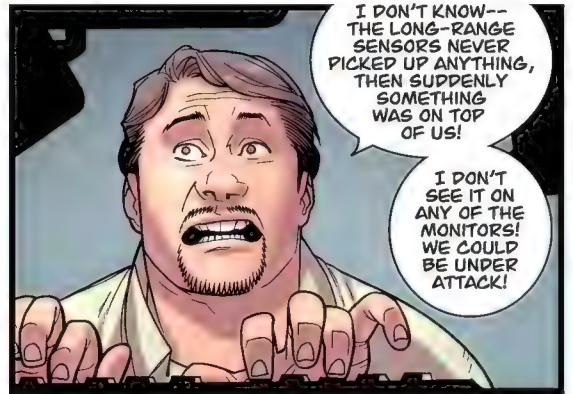
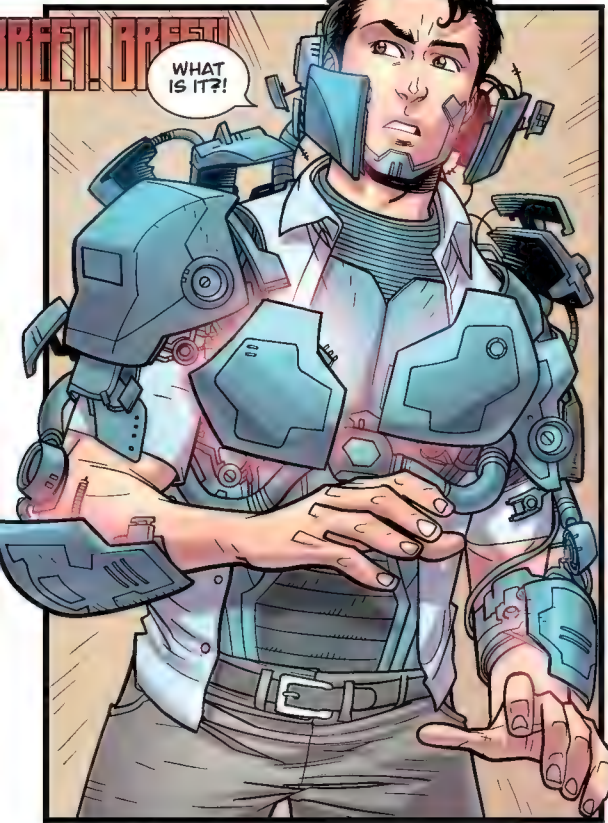
HE'S PROBABLY UP IN HIS SPACE STATION. THEY DON'T SPEND A LOT OF TIME IN THE HOUSE.

OUR APPEARANCE DOESN'T ALARM YOU?

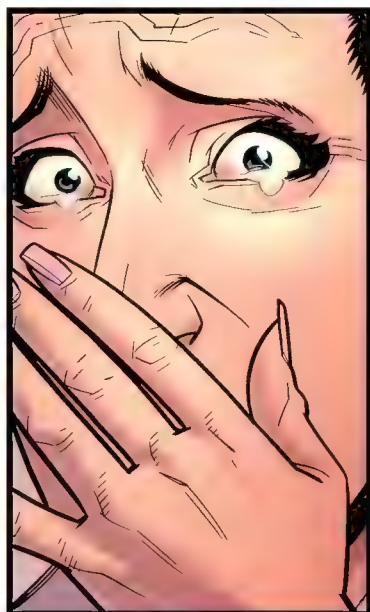
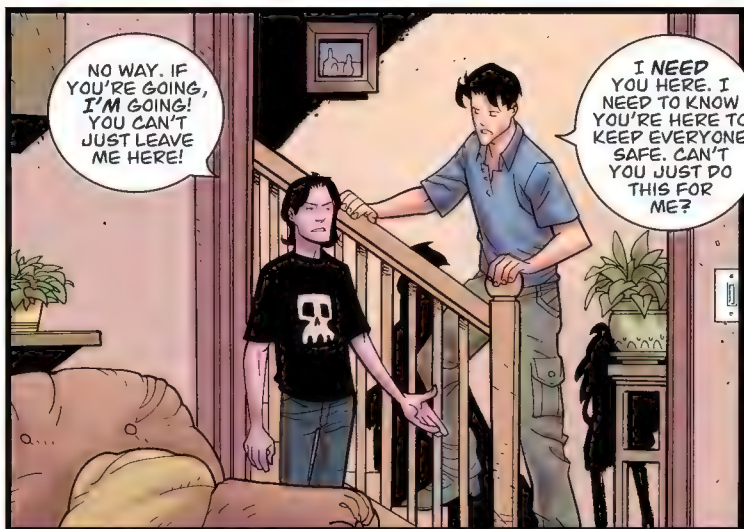
SEEN STRANGER, THAT'S FOR SURE...

...AND THE BAD GUYS DON'T KNOCK FIRST.

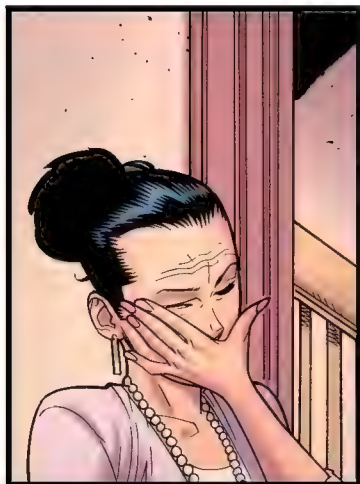
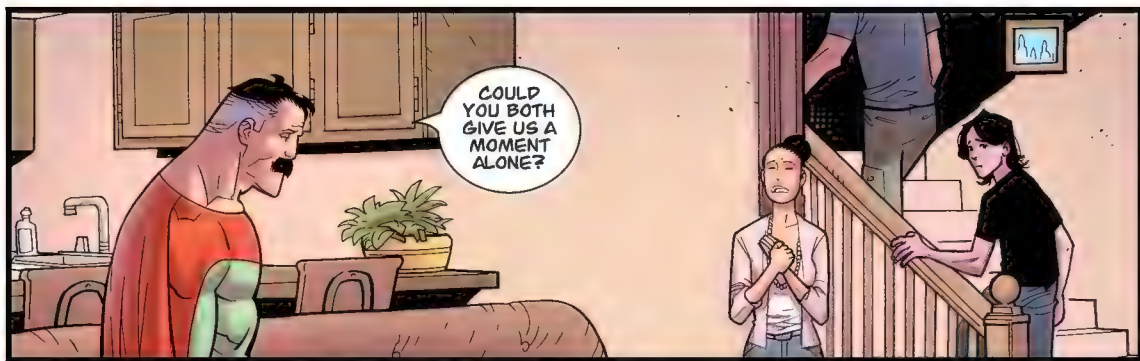






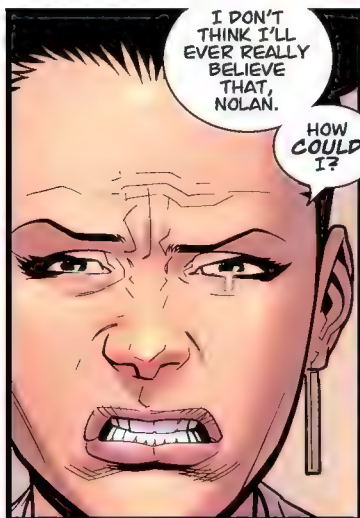
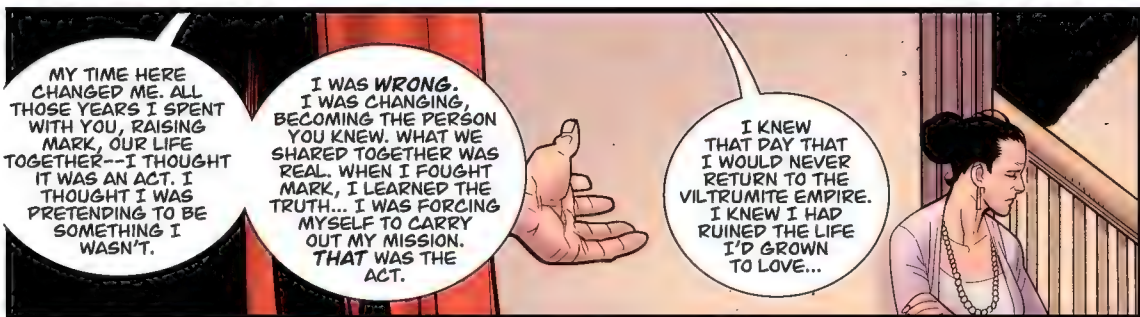




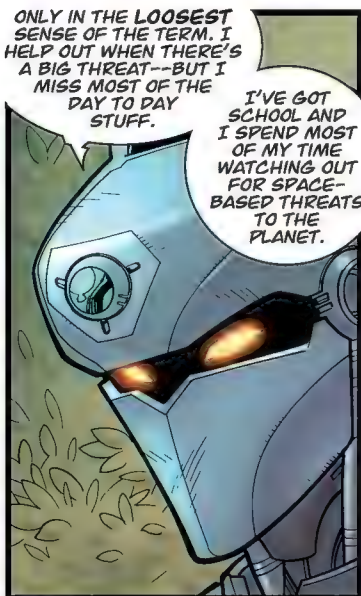


THERE'S NOTHING YOU COULD SAY TO MAKE ME STOP HATING YOU.

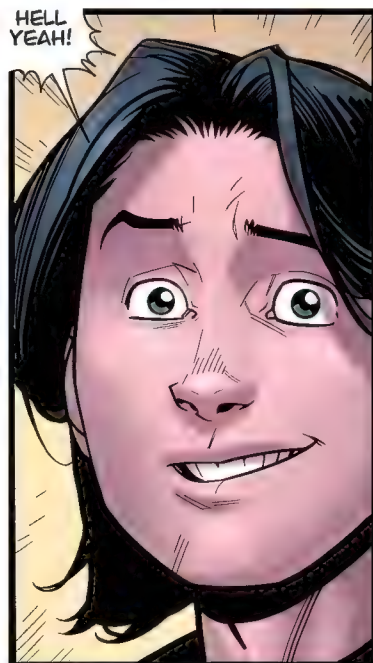
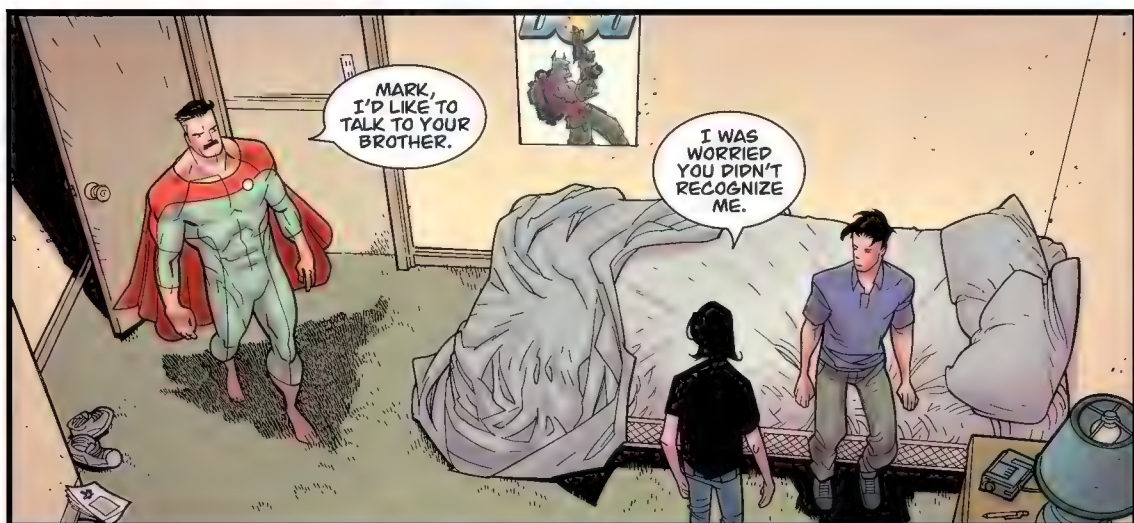
I MEANT NOTHING I SAID THAT DAY.



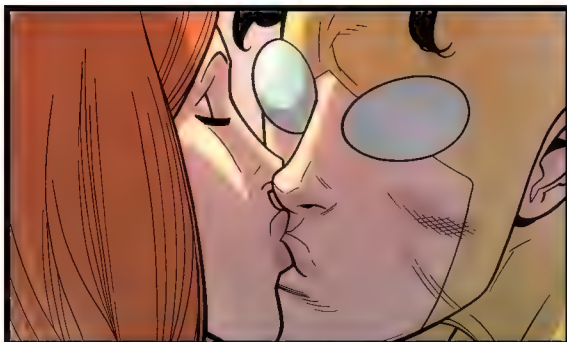
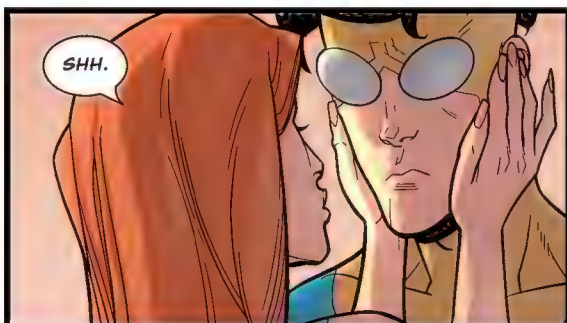
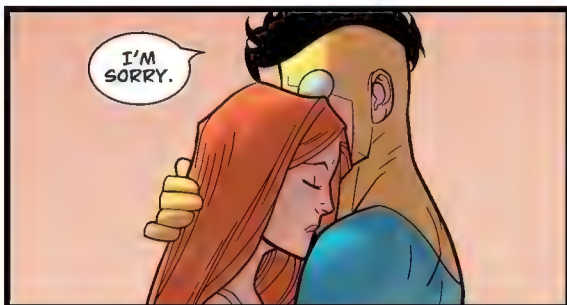
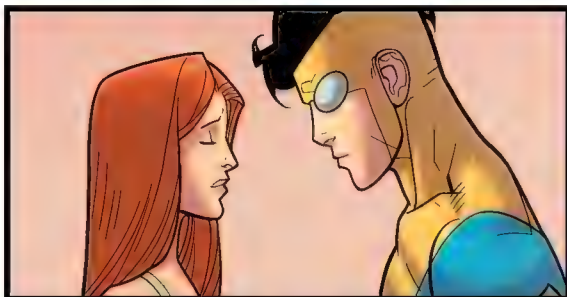
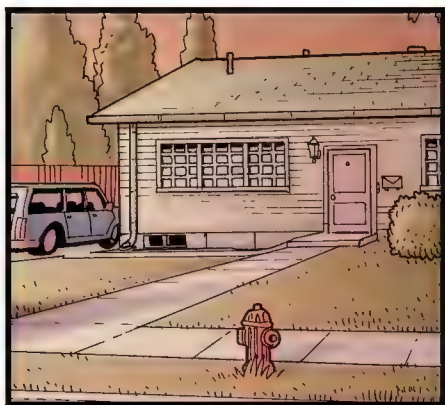




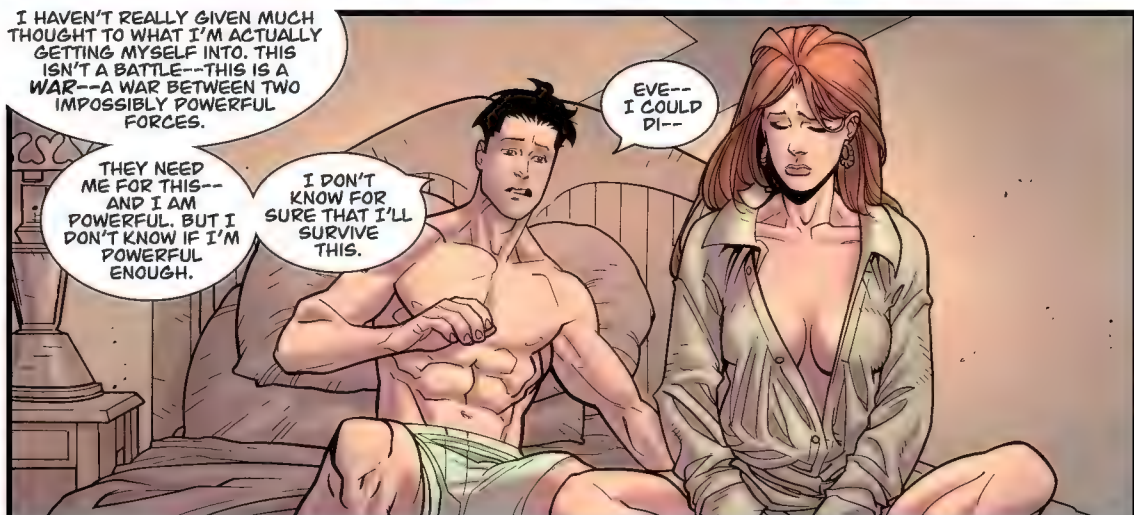
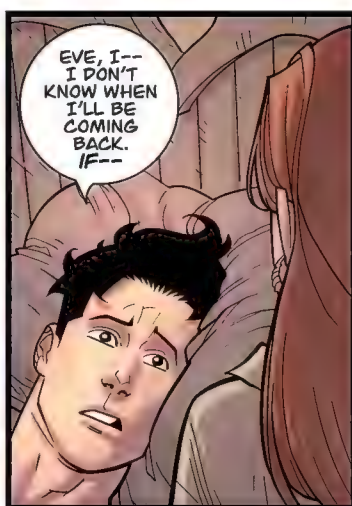
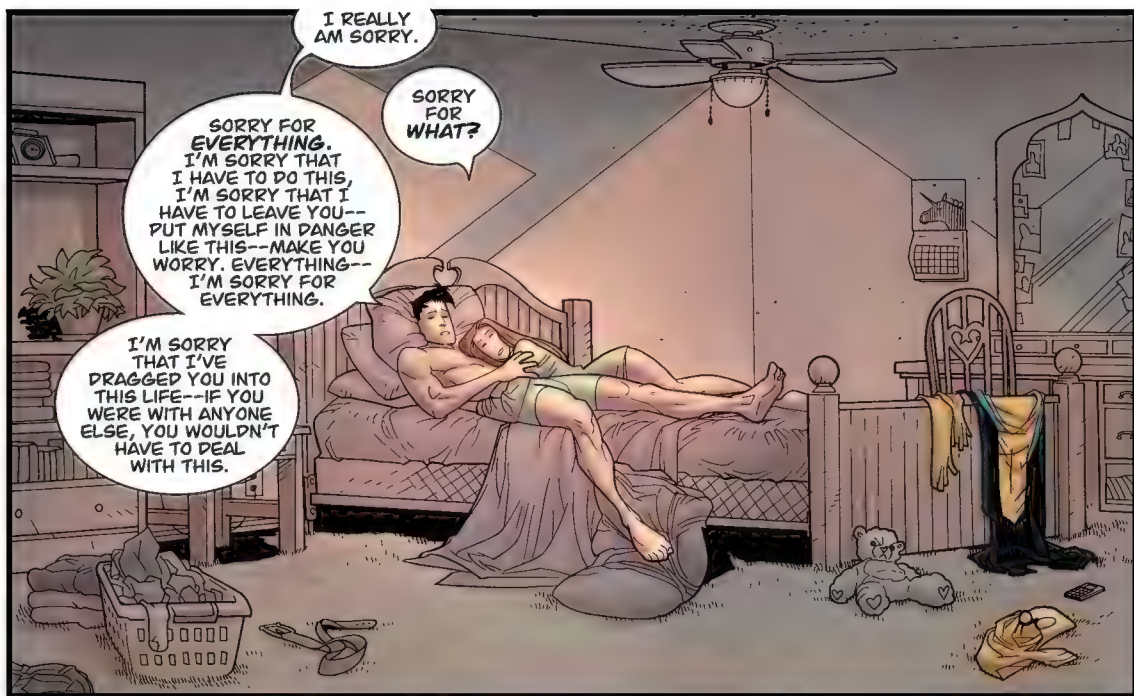




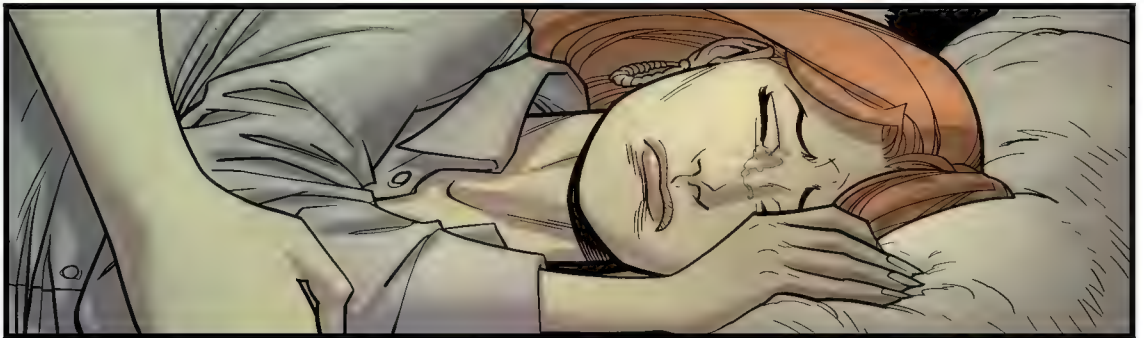




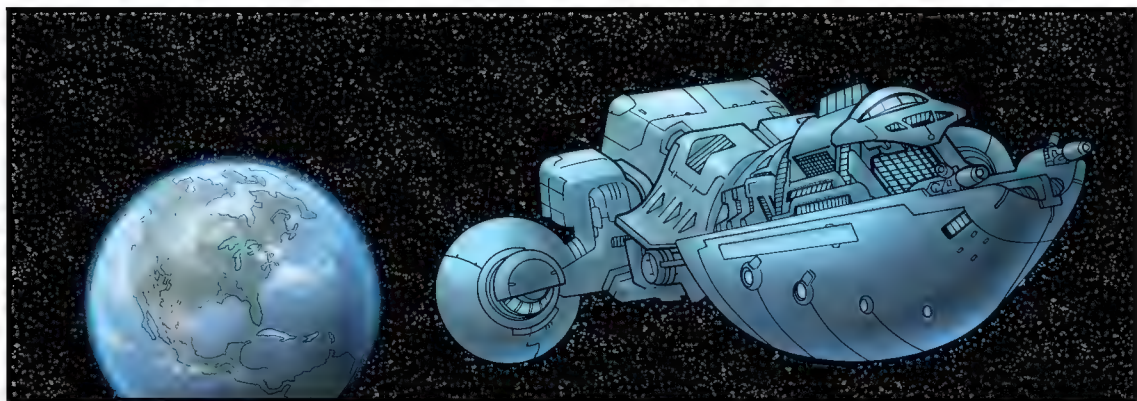












TO BE HONEST, I KIND OF FIGURED WE'D JUST BE FLYING THERE OURSELVES.

I'D RATHER WE HAD. I REQUESTED ANY SHIP BUT **THIS** ONE. THE CREW IS PATHETIC. STILL, EVEN WITH OUR ABILITIES, IT'S DIFFICULT TO TRAVEL THIS KIND OF DISTANCE WITHOUT A SHIP.

WE CAN ONLY HOLD OUR BREATH FOR SO LONG.

TAKE THESE EARPIECES. KEEP THEM IN AT ALL TIMES. IT WILL ALLOW US TO SPEAK TELEPATHICALLY TO EACH OTHER IN SPACE. IT'S SIMILAR TO WHAT ALLEN USES. IF WE DON'T ALL HAVE THEM, THE DISCUSSION ONLY WORKS ONE WAY.

NEAT. ALWAYS WONDERED ABOUT THAT.

WAIT, HOW LONG CAN WE HOLD OUR BREATH?

SORRY, I HAVEN'T GOTTEN AROUND TO TEACHING HIM THAT.

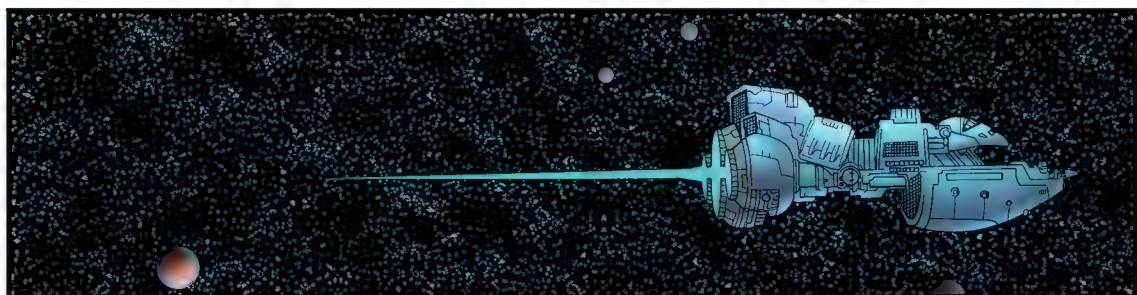
I'VE BEEN A LITTLE PREOCCUPIED AS OF LATE.

I SAW THAT. SHE'S VERY PRETTY.

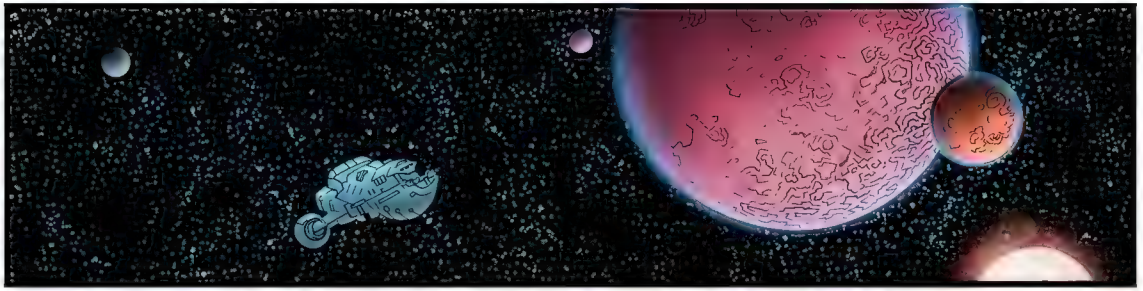
THAT'S NOT WHAT I WAS TALKING ABOUT.

HAH.

SO SERIOUSLY-- I CAN HOLD MY BREATH FOR A LONG TIME?







WHOA, WHAT WAS THAT BLUR? DID WE JUST PASS A PLANET? THAT WAS COOL.

YES, WHENEVER POSSIBLE WE TRY TO CHART OUR COURSE ALONG THE PATH OF ANY PLANETS WITH A BREATHABLE ATMOSPHERE. IT COMES IN HANDY DURING EMERGENCIES.

THANKS FOR LETTING US ON THE BRIDGE, CAPTAIN. WE'VE BEEN GETTING A LITTLE STIR CRAZY THESE LAST FEW DAYS. SO IT'S FUN TO ACTUALLY SEE WHERE WE'RE GOING FOR A CHANGE.

NOT A PROBLEM, INVINCIBLE. THE COALITION--

WHAT IS IT? WHY HAVE WE GONE TO RED ALERT?

BREET!  
BREET!

WE ARE DETECTING AN OBJECT THAT IS ON A DIRECT COLLISION COURSE WITH THE SHIP. OUR SPEED WAS ADJUSTED AND THE OBJECT COMPENSATED TO MAINTAIN COURSE.

CURRENTLY TRYING TO GET A READING ON IT, SIR.

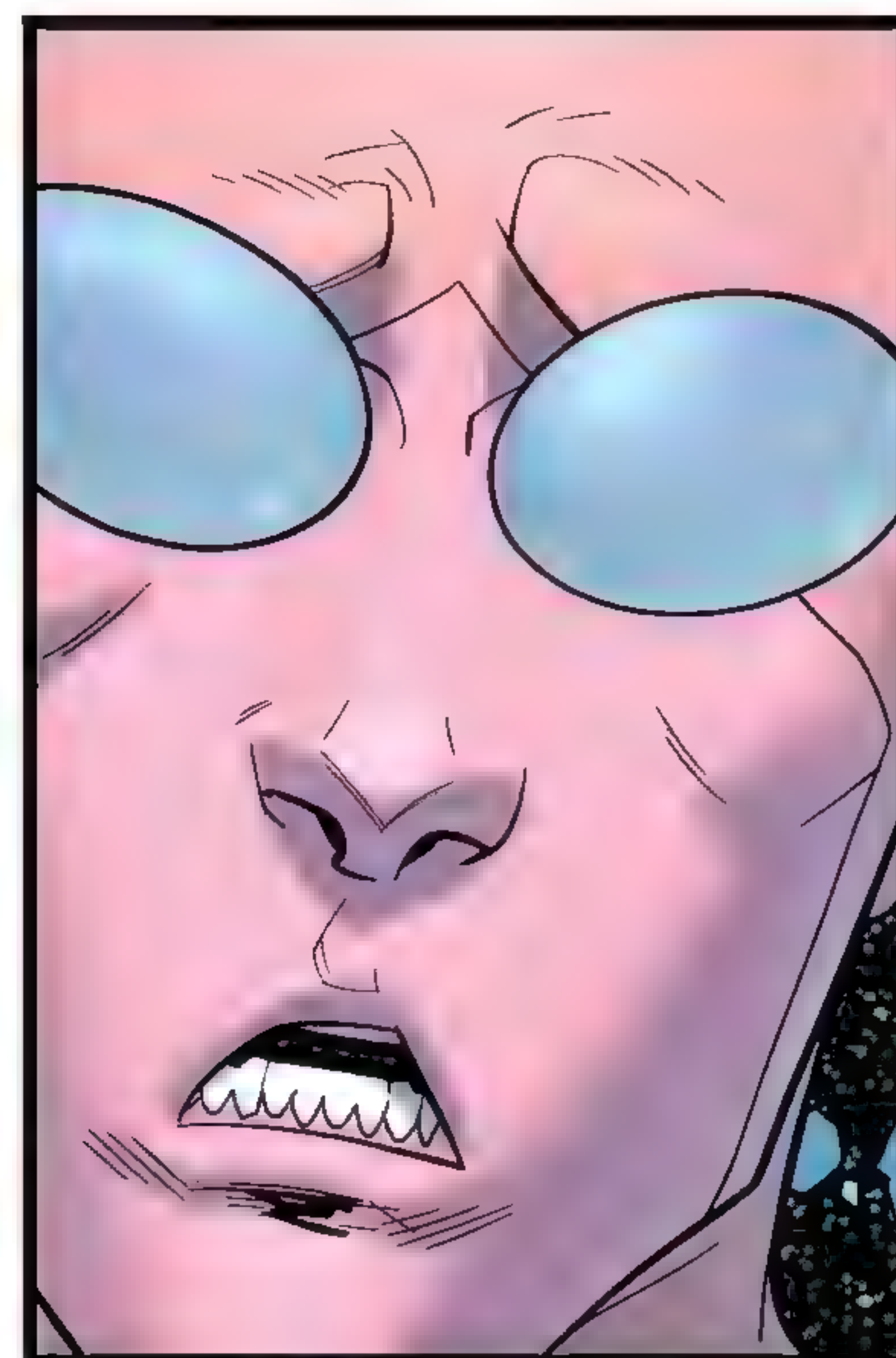
BREET!

BREET!

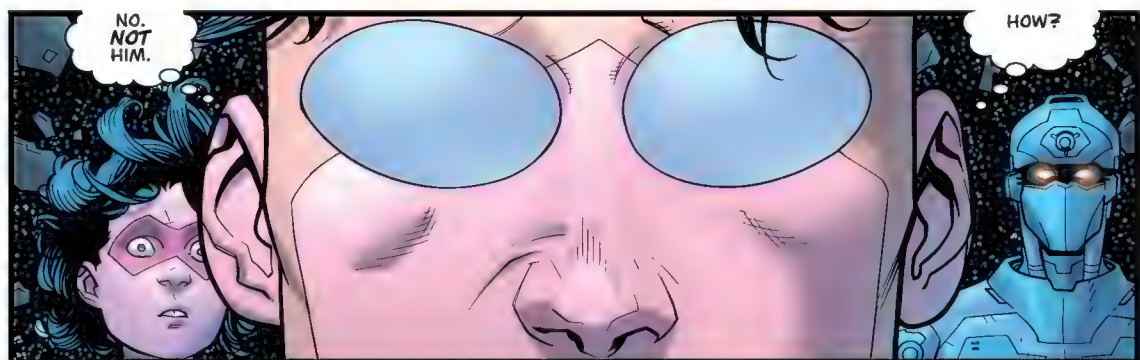
IT'S MOVING IN FAR TOO FAST. WE CAN'T GET A CLEAR READING ON IT.

BRACE FOR IMPACT IN THREE, TWO--









NO.  
NOT  
HIM.

HOW?



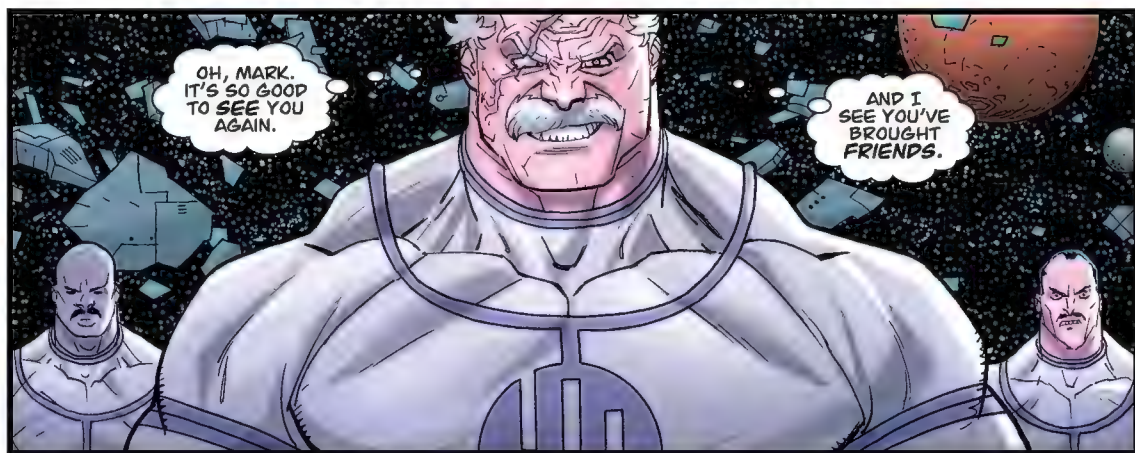




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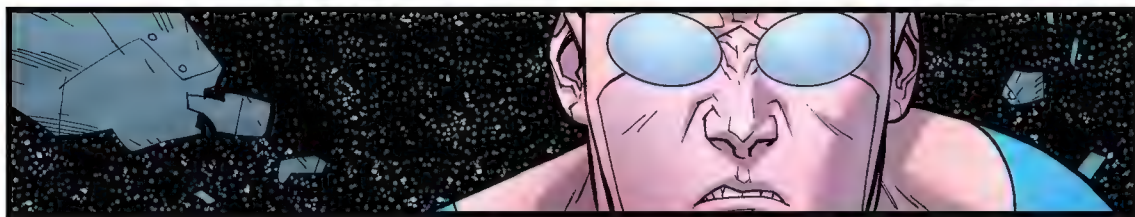






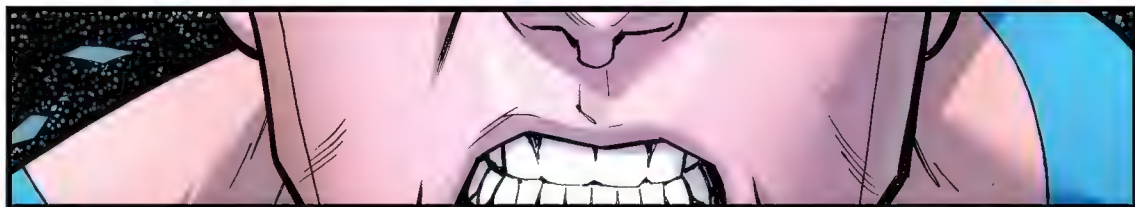
OH, MARK.  
IT'S SO GOOD  
TO SEE YOU  
AGAIN.

AND I  
SEE YOU'VE  
BROUGHT  
FRIENDS.



PUTTING IT ALL ON THE  
TABLE, MY ORDERS ARE  
SIMPLE. SLAUGHTER  
YOU AND EVERYONE  
WITH YOU.

I'M SO  
HAPPY TO GET  
ANOTHER SHOT  
AT YOU. I'LL ADMIT  
I UNDERESTIMATED  
YOU THE FIRST TIME.  
I TRUST YOU LEFT  
THE GIRL AT HOME  
THIS TIME?



A PITY. YOU'VE BROUGHT ALONG SOME HELP,  
WHICH SHOULD MAKE THINGS MORE  
INTERESTING. ALTHOUGH, I THINK  
YOU'VE GROSSLY OVERESTIMATED  
THE ABILITIES OF THE GELDARIANS.  
THEY NEED THEIR TECHNOLOGY TO  
HOLD THEIR HEADS UP. HE'LL  
BE USELESS.

AND THE  
BOY, GOOD TO  
SEE HIS ARM  
HEALED.  
I'LL ENJOY  
BREAKING IT  
AGAIN.

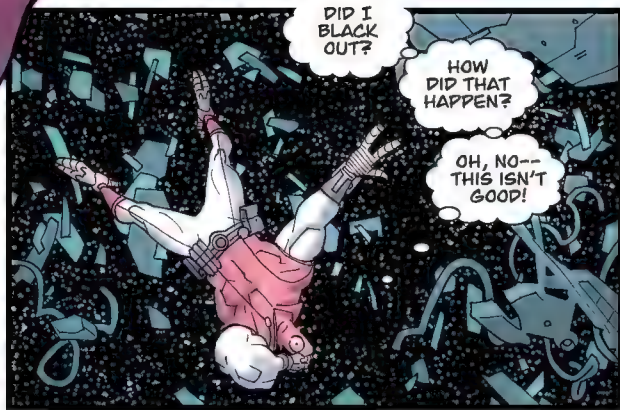
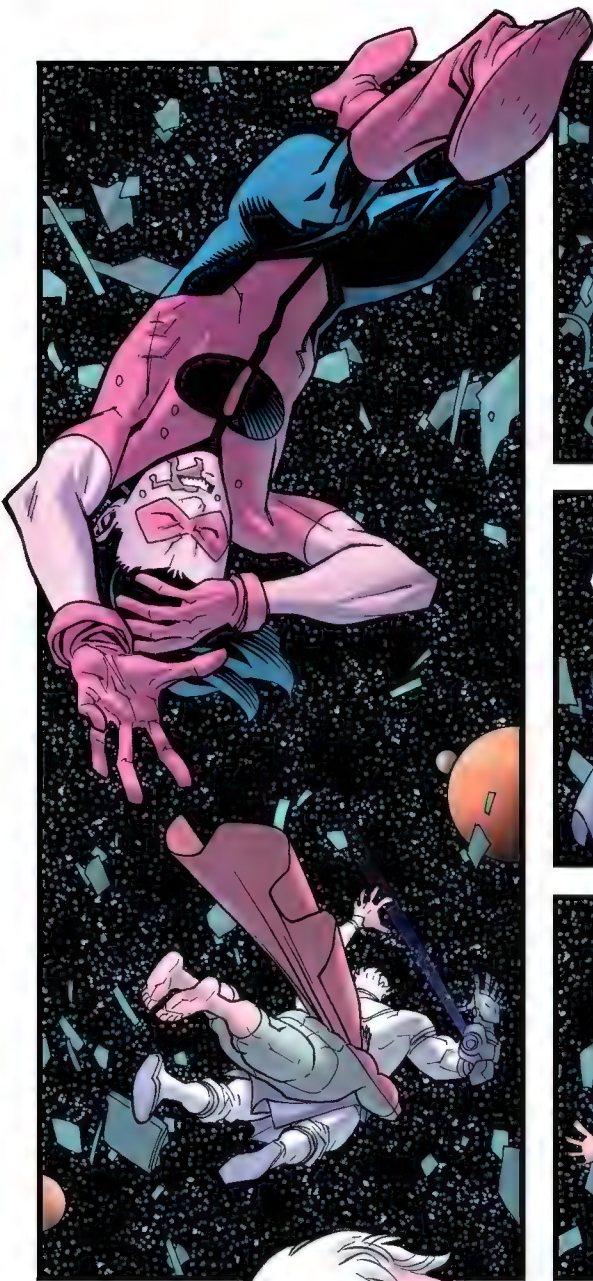
MARK, I  
WANT YOU TO  
ENJOY THE  
SHOW, SO I'LL  
BE KILLING  
YOU LAST.



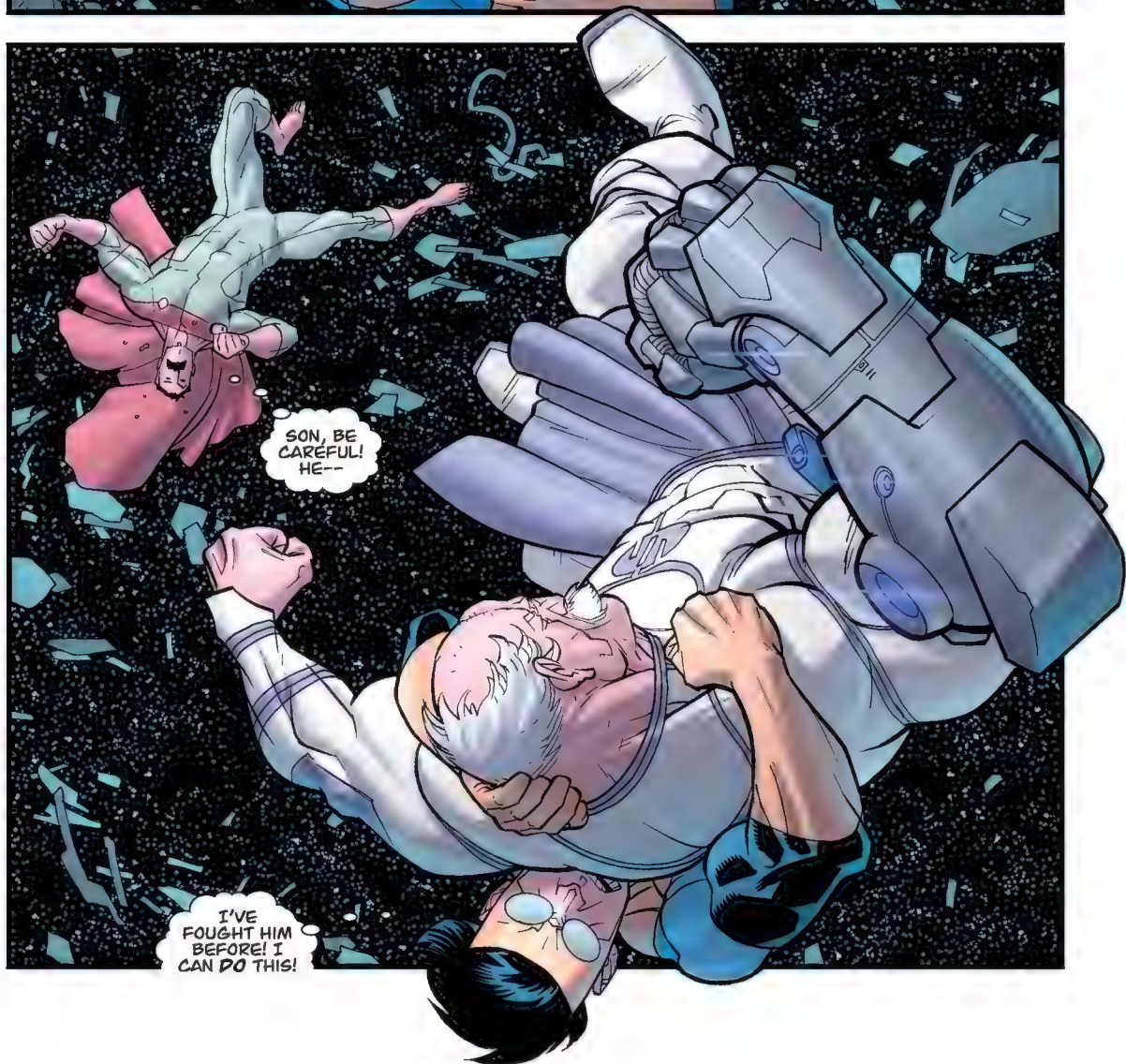
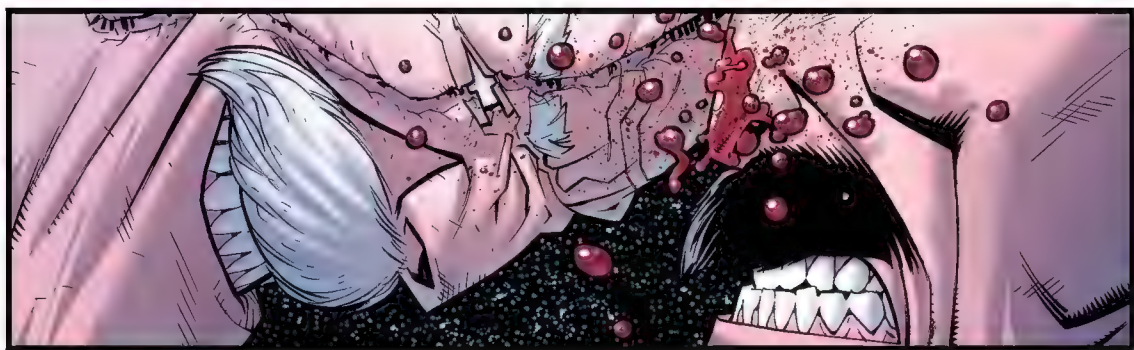




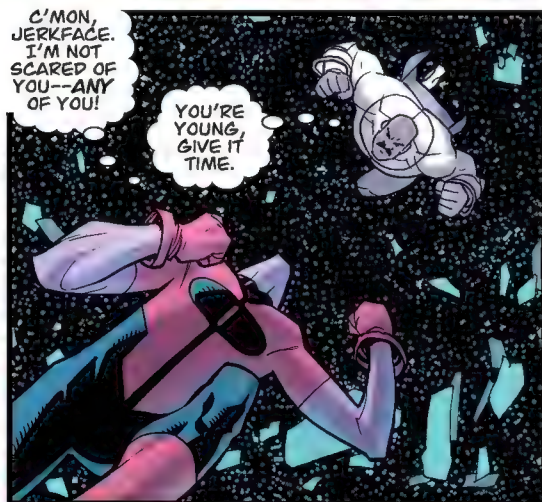
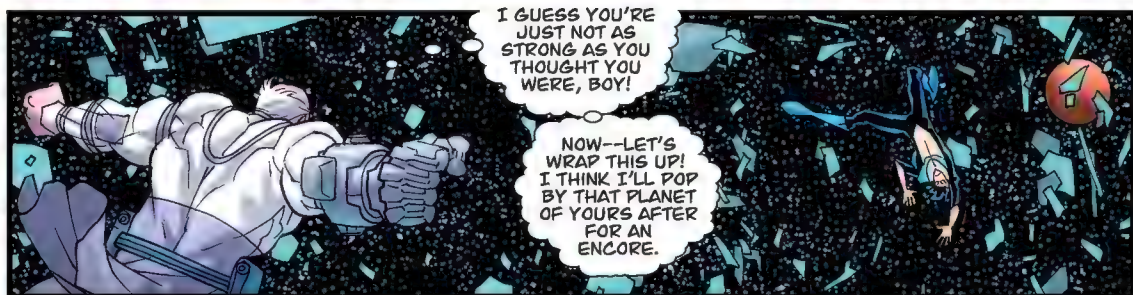
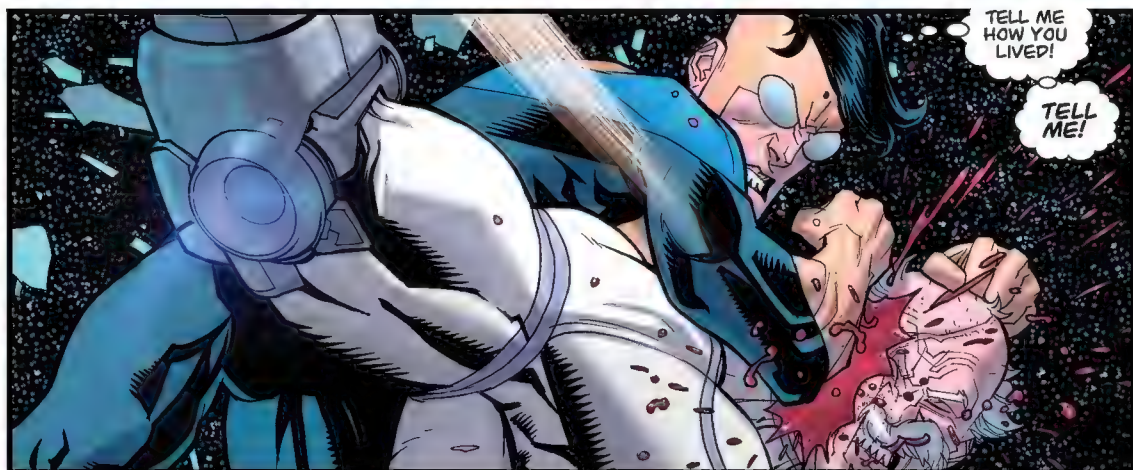
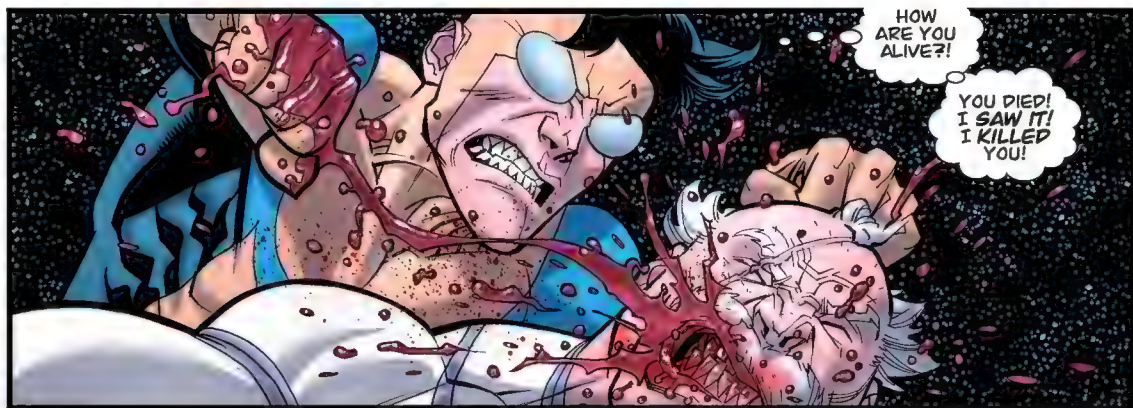




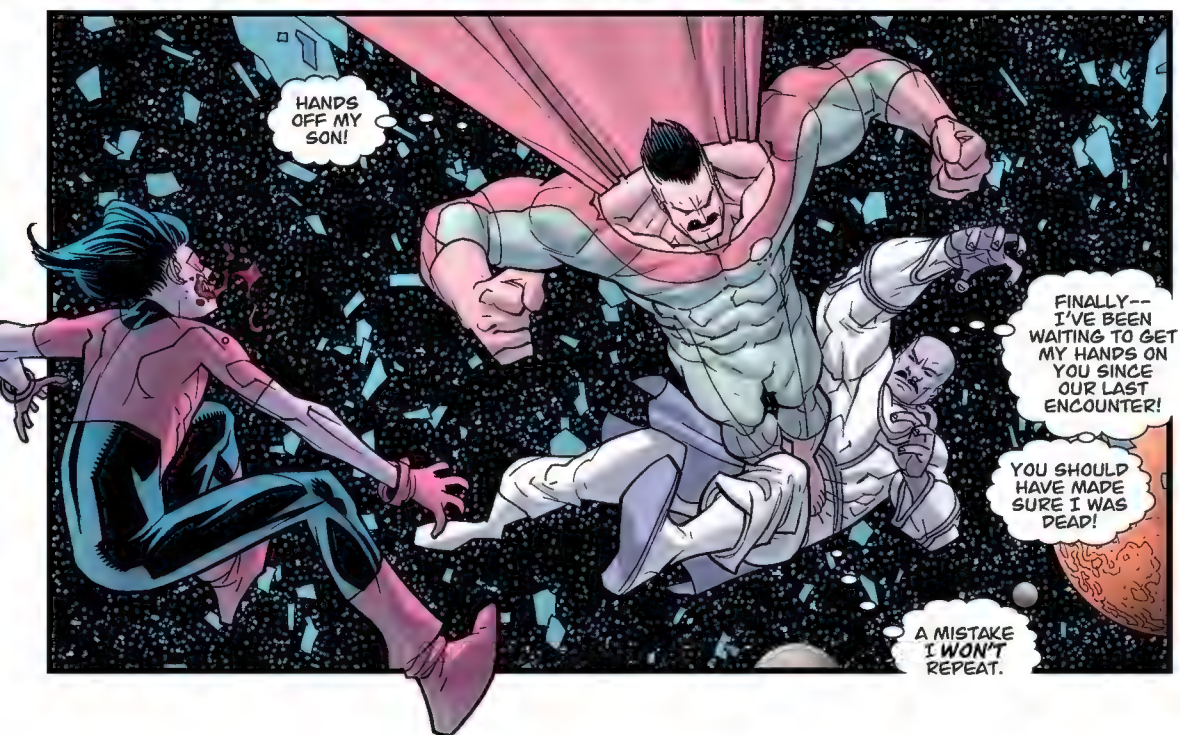
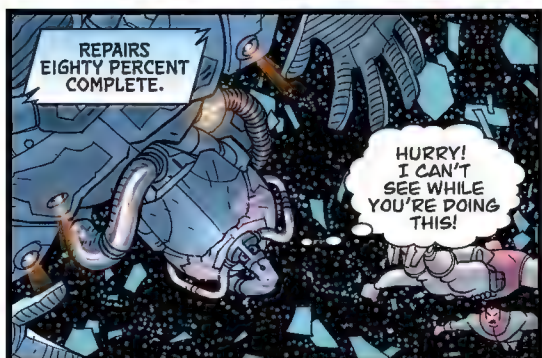
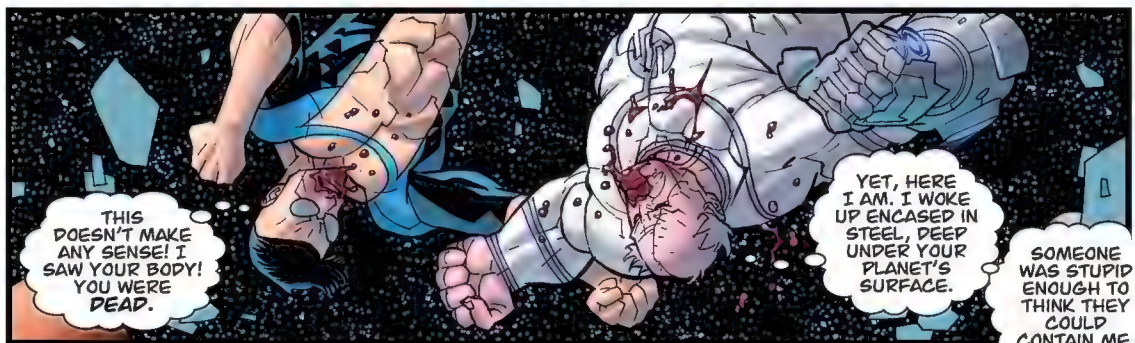
















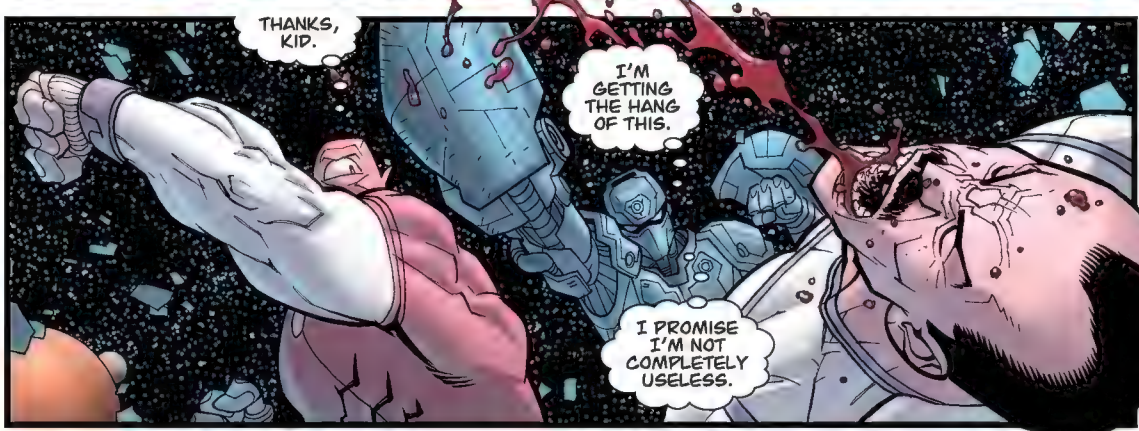
CECIL  
KEPT  
YOU ALIVE?!  
THAT HAS  
TO BE IT!

I CAN'T  
BELIEVE  
HE'D--WHEN  
I SEE HIM  
AGAIN....!



HOW  
OPTIMISTIC  
YOU ARE.

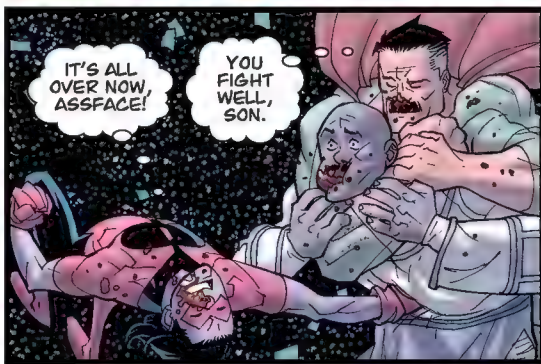
YOU WON'T  
BE SEEING  
ANYONE  
AGAIN!



THANKS,  
KID.

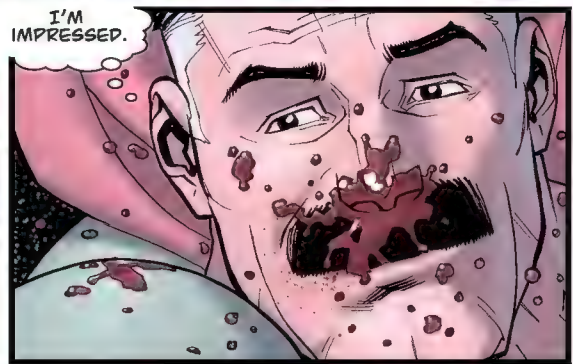
I'M  
GETTING  
THE HANG  
OF THIS.

I PROMISE  
I'M NOT  
COMPLETELY  
USELESS.

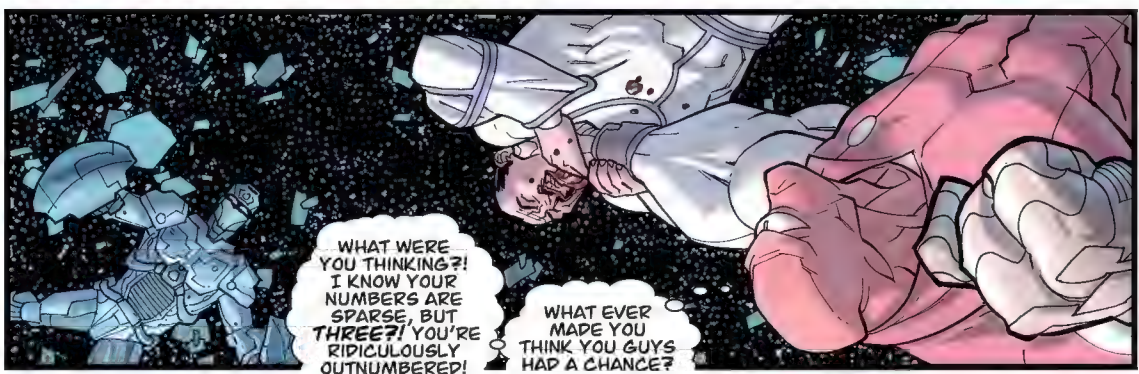


IT'S ALL  
OVER NOW,  
ASSFACE!

YOU  
FIGHT  
WELL,  
SON.



I'M  
IMPRESSED.



WHAT WERE  
YOU THINKING?!  
I KNOW YOUR  
NUMBERS ARE  
SPARSE, BUT  
THREE?! YOU'RE  
RIDICULOUSLY  
OUTNUMBERED!

WHAT EVER  
MADE YOU  
THINK YOU GUYS  
HAD A CHANCE?

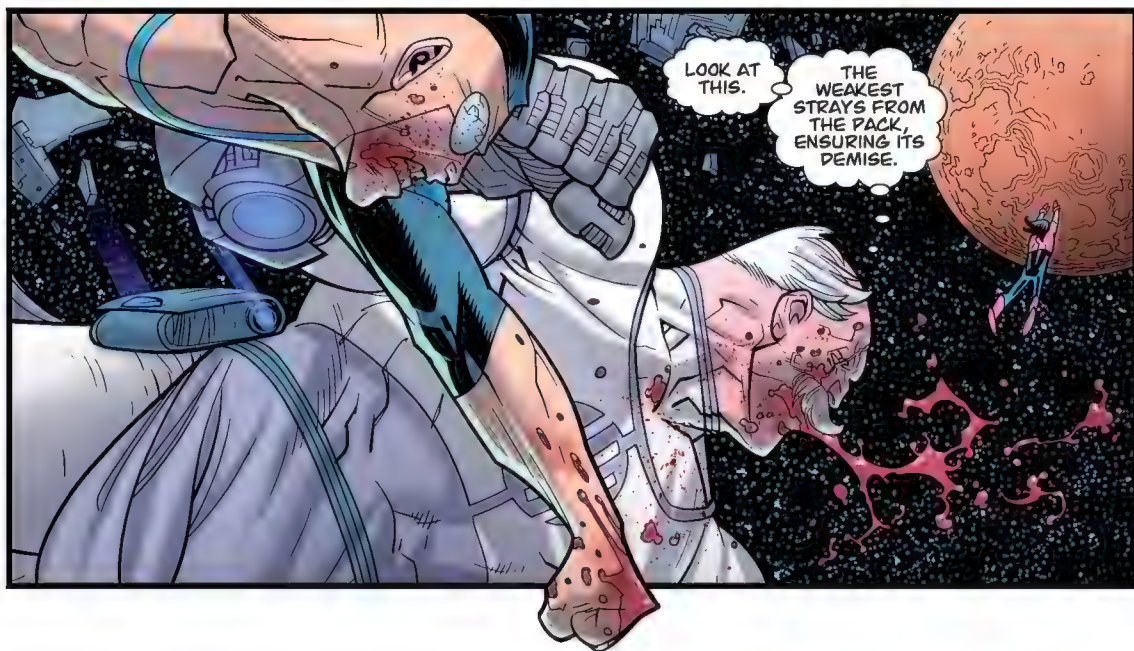
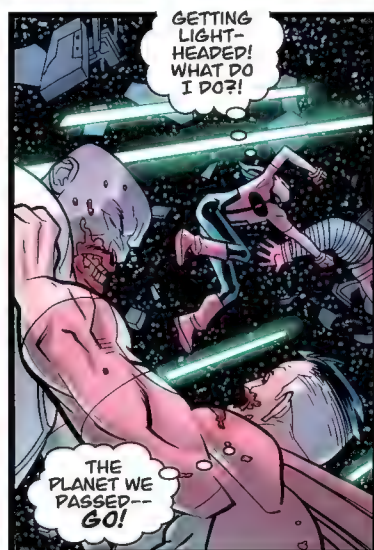




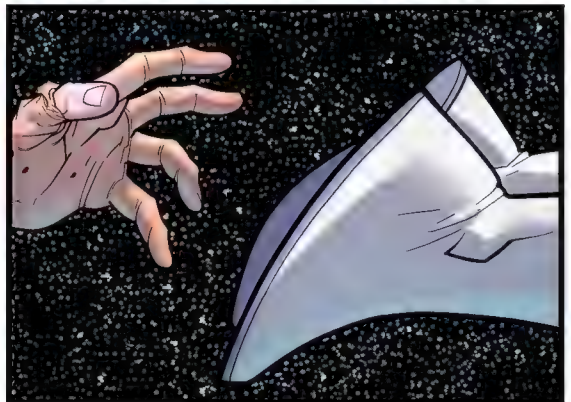
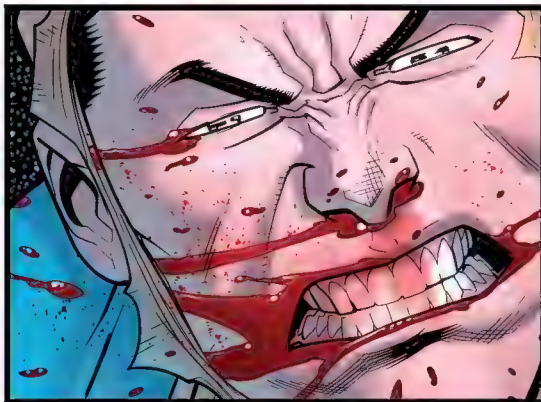
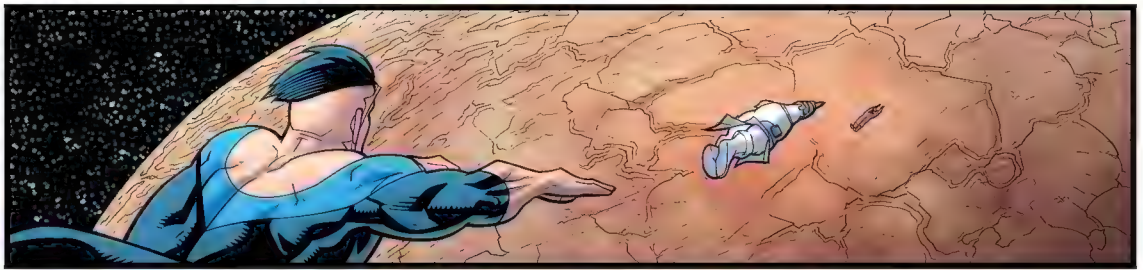
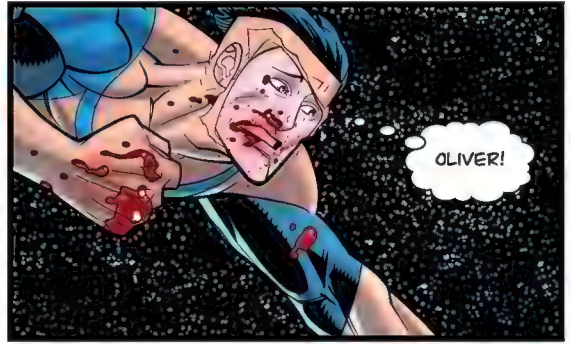
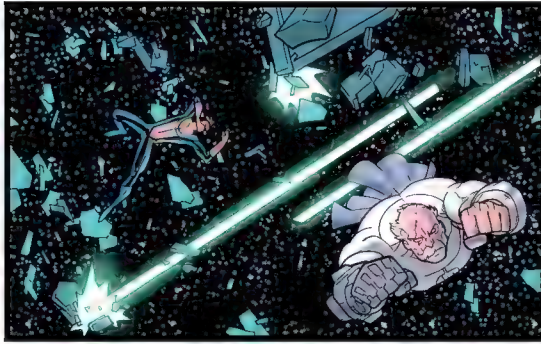
NEVER  
MIND  
THEN.

OH.





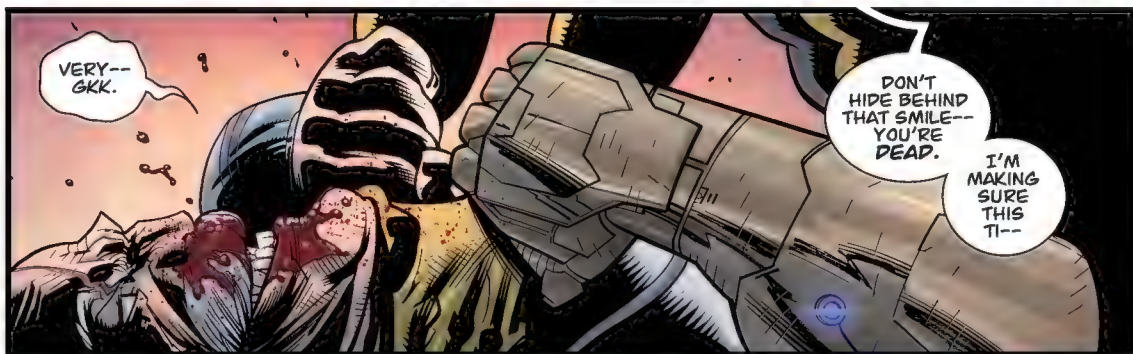




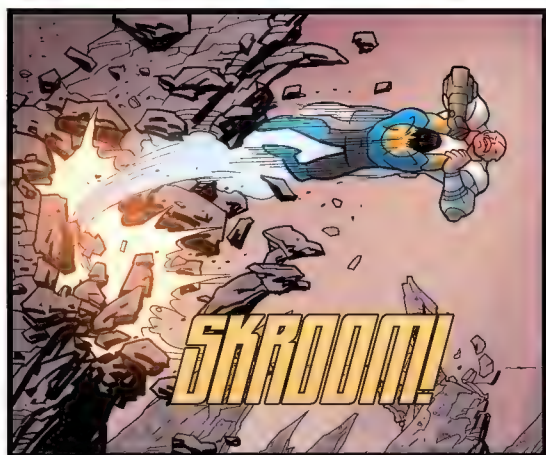
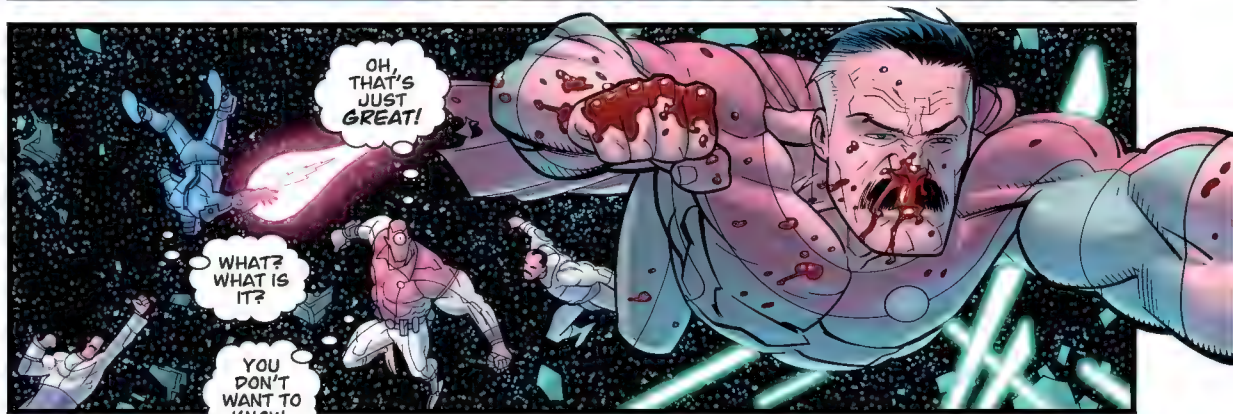
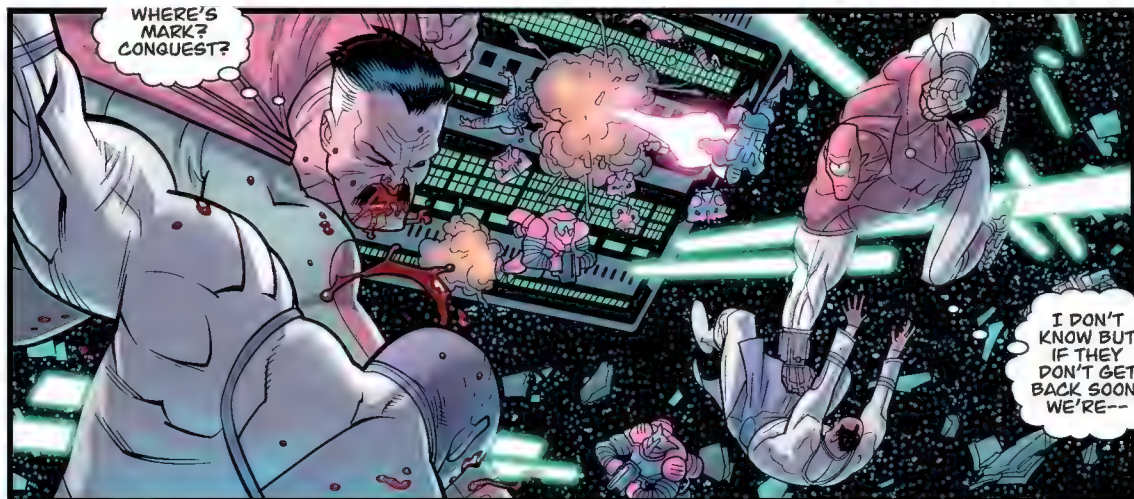
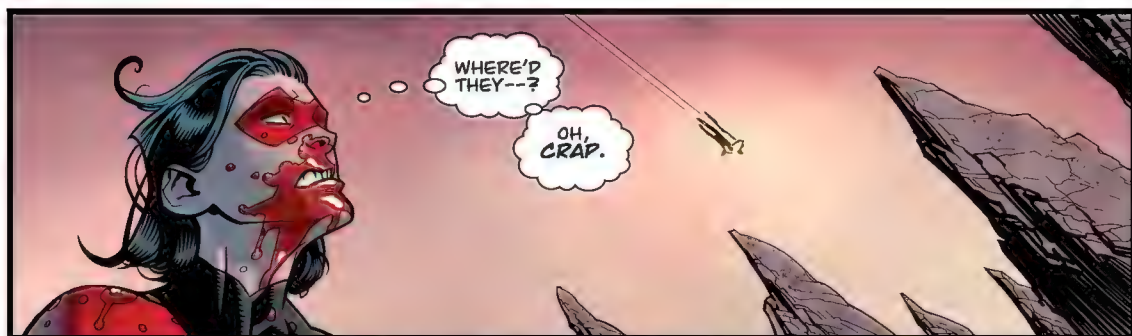












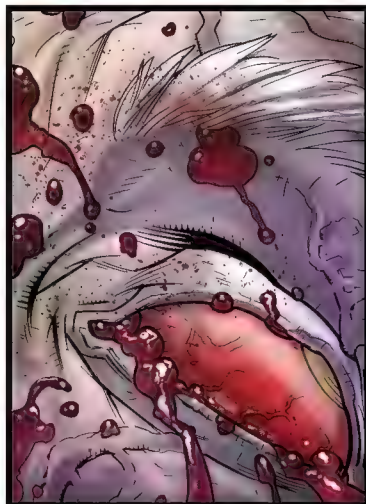
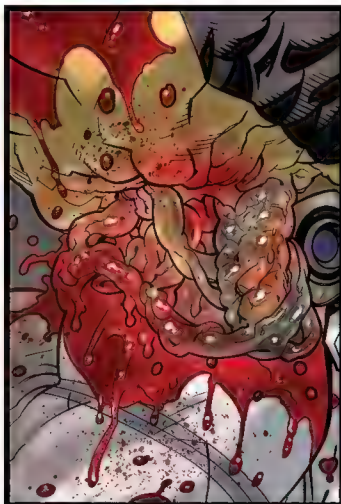
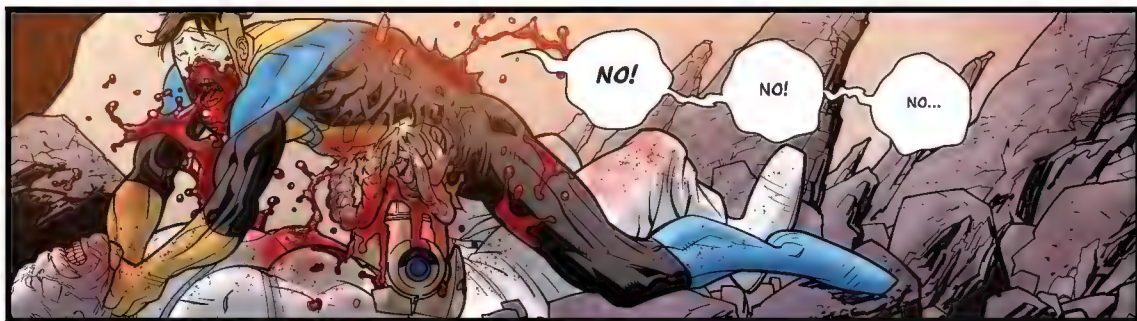
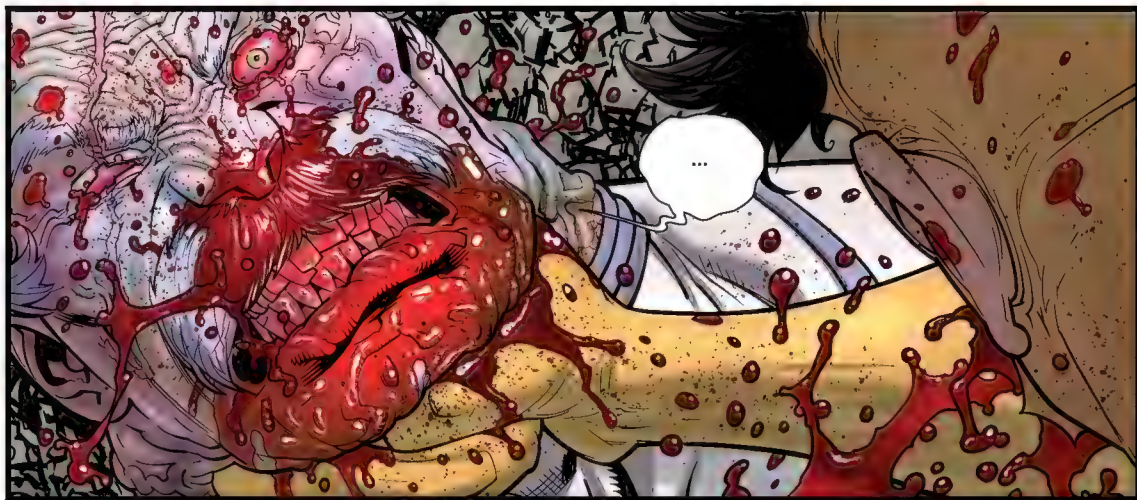




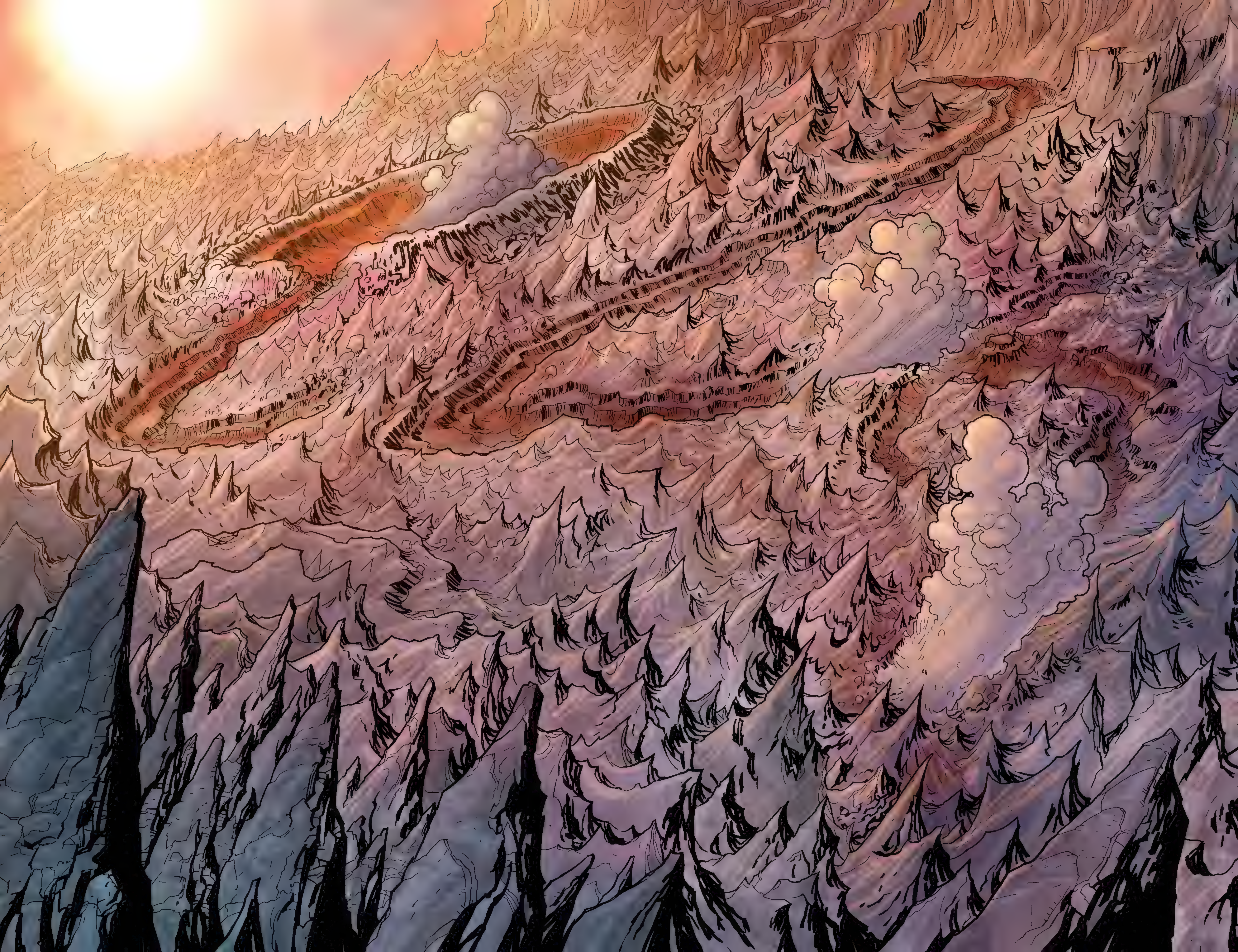








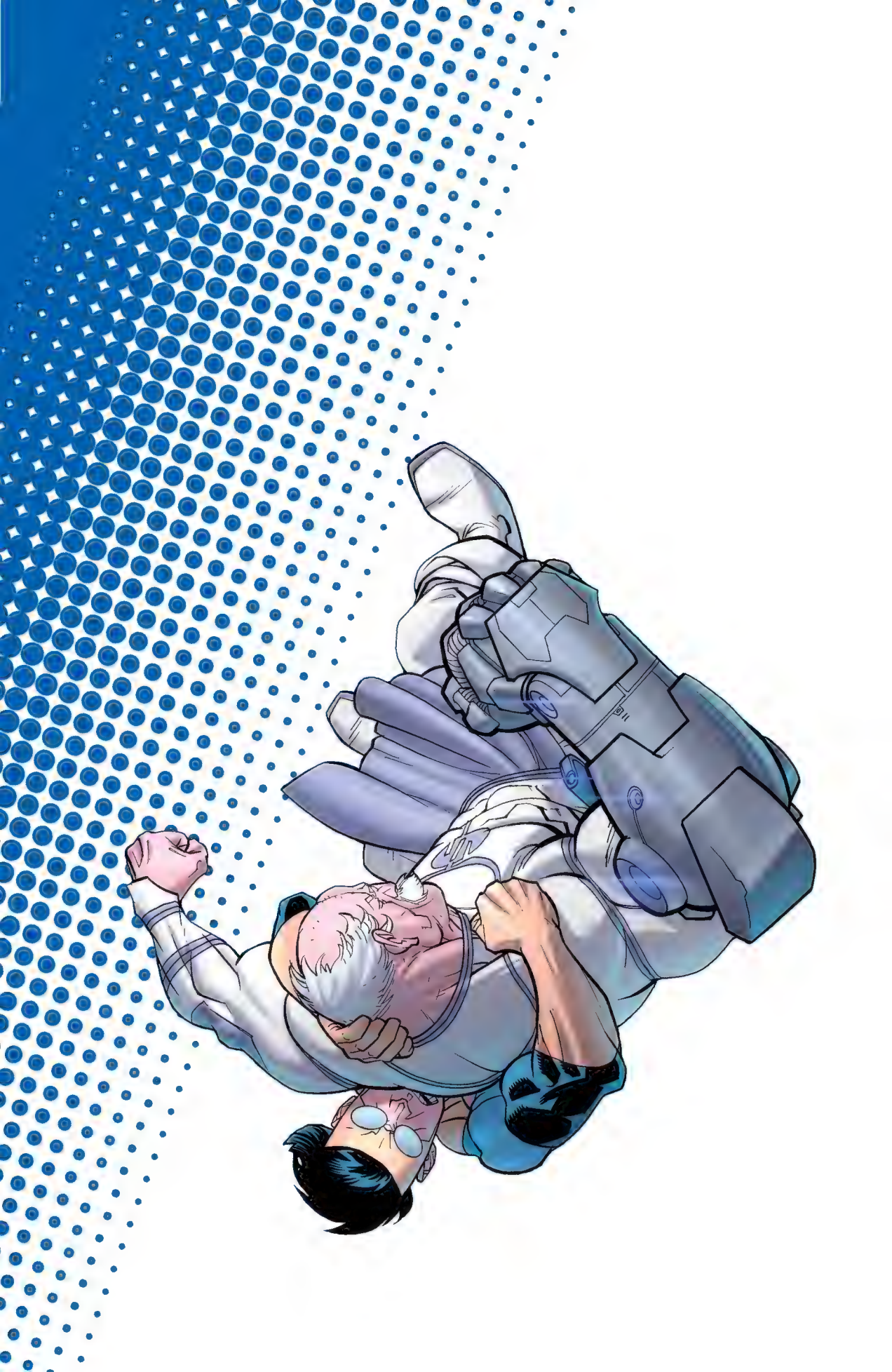










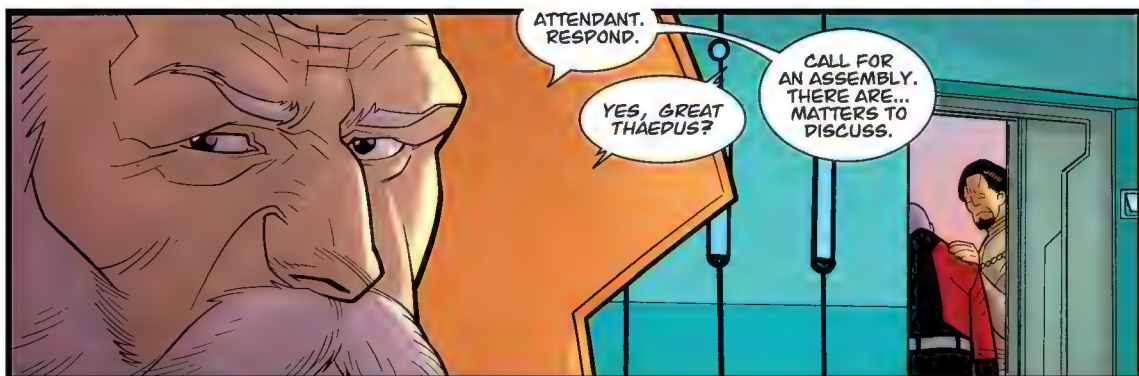
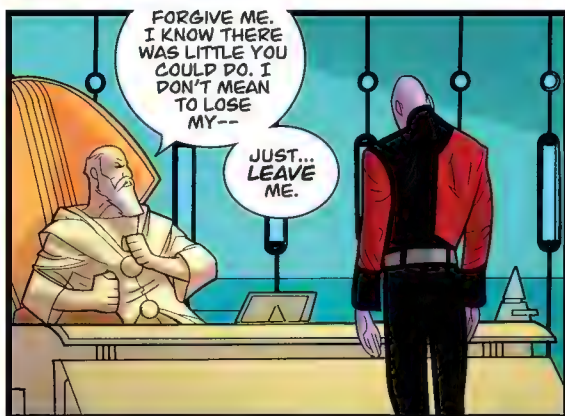




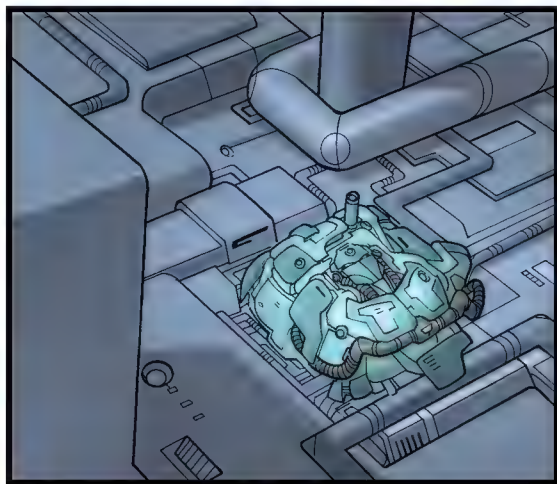
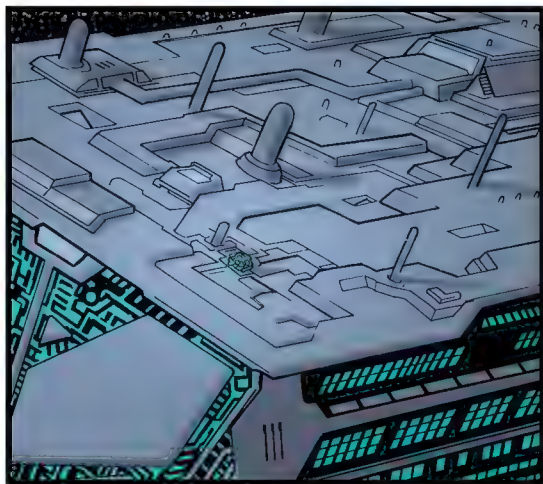
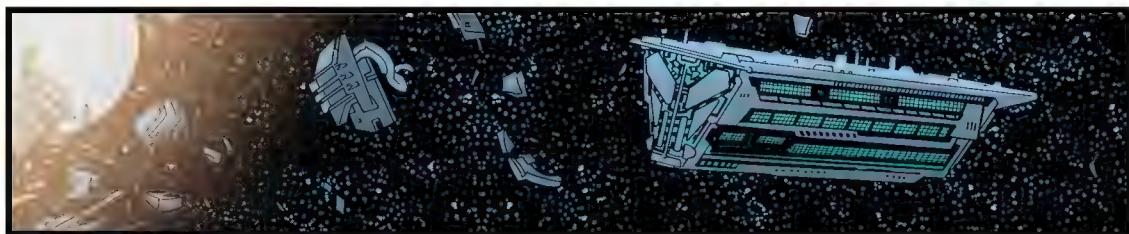
# CHAPTER 73



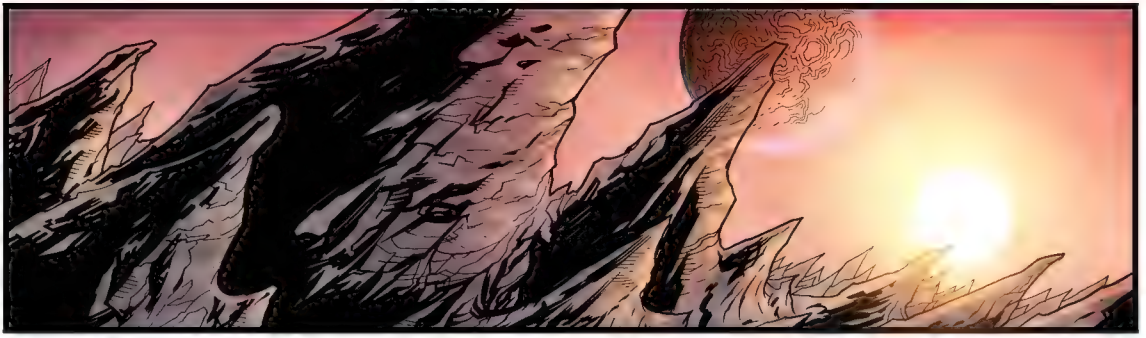




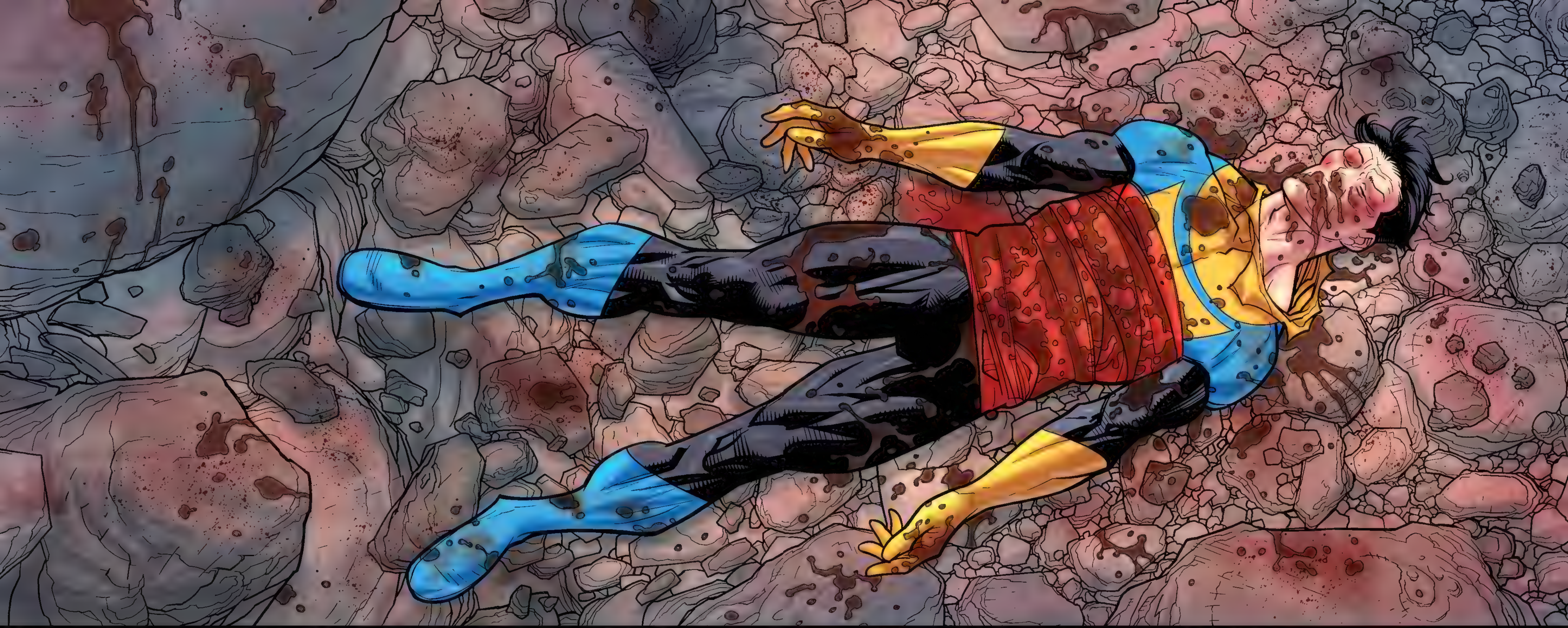




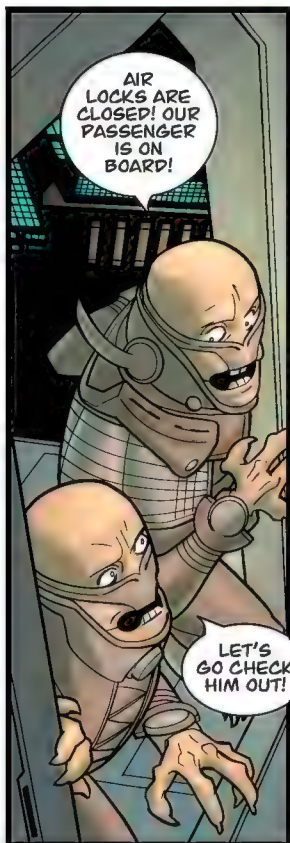
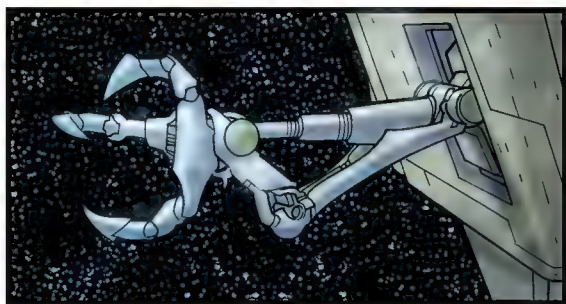
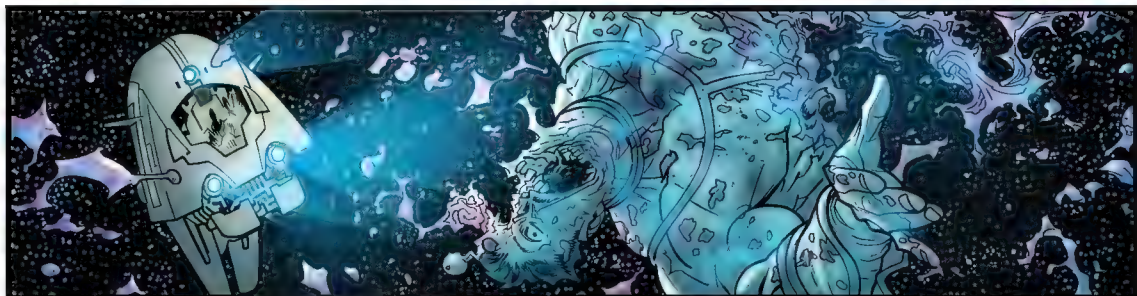
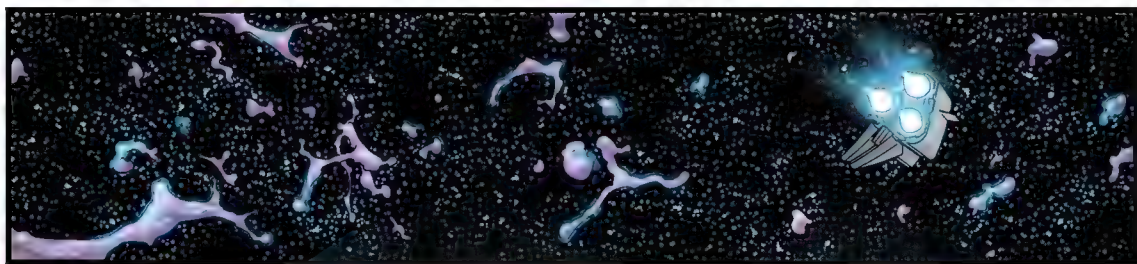






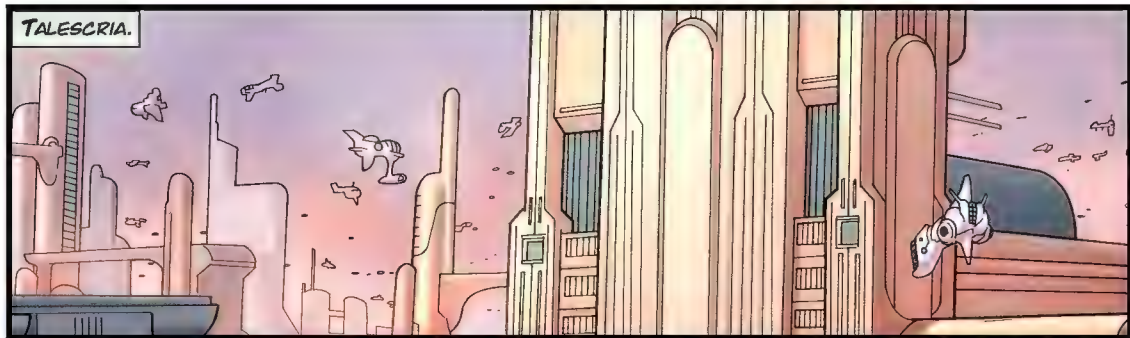








TALESCRIA.



SORRY TO DISTURB YOU, GRAND THAEDUS, BUT YOU ARE NEEDED.

I WILL JOIN YOU IN A MOMENT.

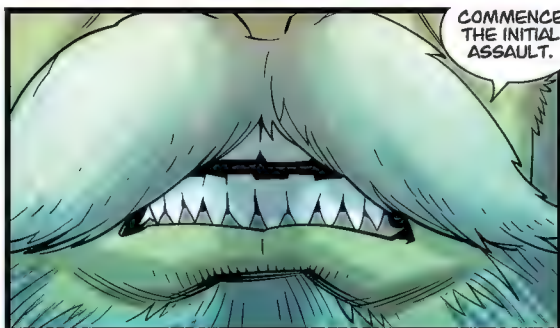
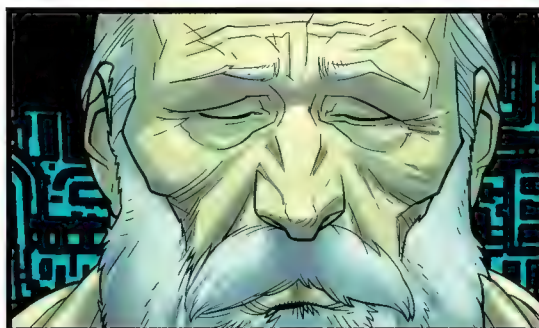
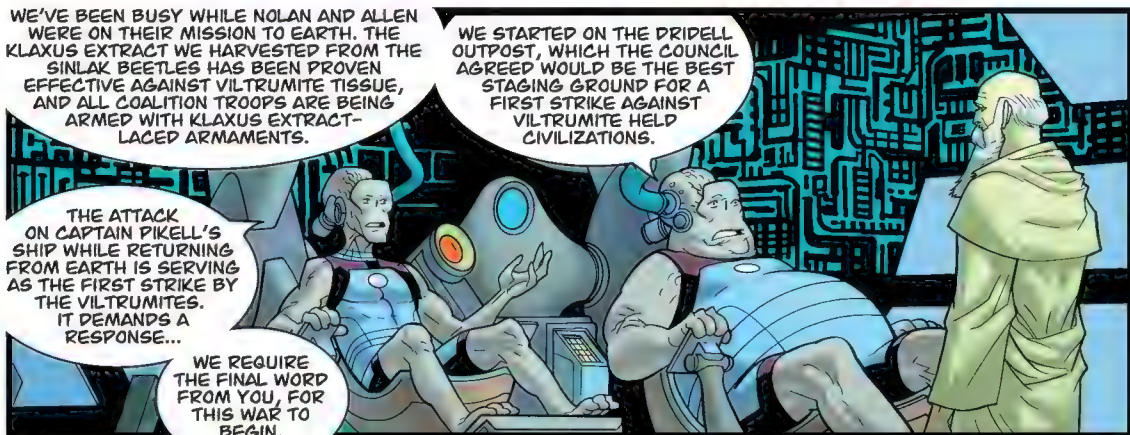


WE'VE BEEN BUSY WHILE NOLAN AND ALLEN WERE ON THEIR MISSION TO EARTH. THE KLAXUS EXTRACT WE HARVESTED FROM THE SINLAK BEETLES HAS BEEN PROVEN EFFECTIVE AGAINST VILTRUMITE TISSUE, AND ALL COALITION TROOPS ARE BEING ARMED WITH KLAXUS EXTRACT-LACED ARMAMENTS.

THE ATTACK ON CAPTAIN PIKELL'S SHIP WHILE RETURNING FROM EARTH IS SERVING AS THE FIRST STRIKE BY THE VILTRUMITES. IT DEMANDS A RESPONSE...

WE REQUIRE THE FINAL WORD FROM YOU, FOR THIS WAR TO BEGIN.

WE STARTED ON THE DRIDELL OUTPOST, WHICH THE COUNCIL AGREED WOULD BE THE BEST STAGING GROUND FOR A FIRST STRIKE AGAINST VILTRUMITE HELD CIVILIZATIONS.



COMMENCE THE INITIAL ASSAULT.

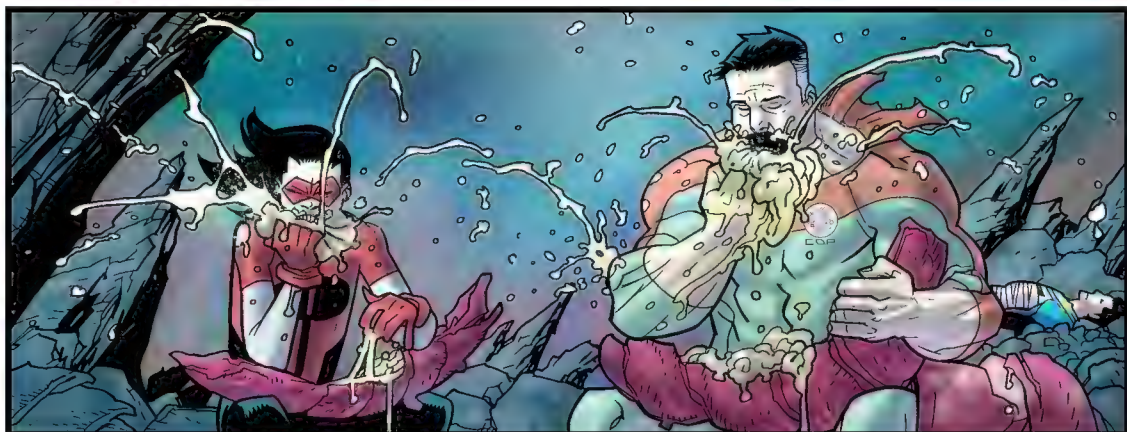
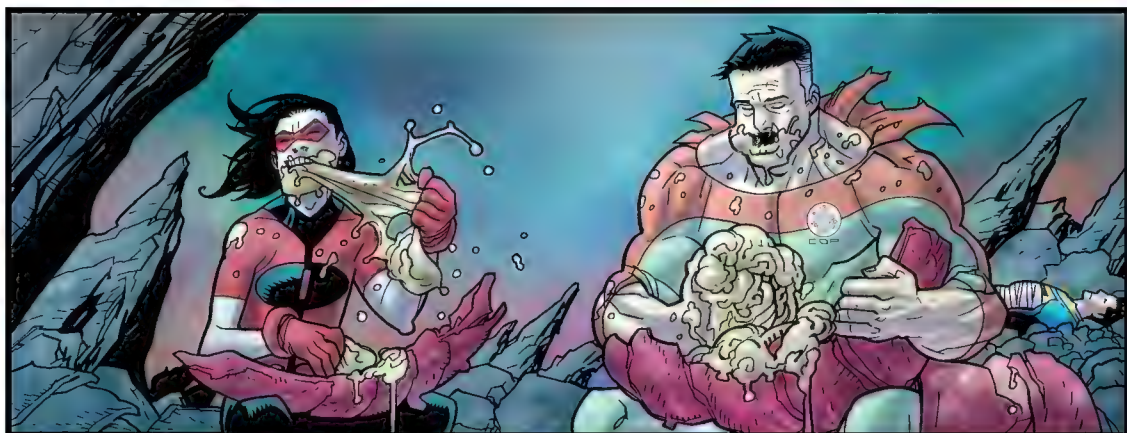




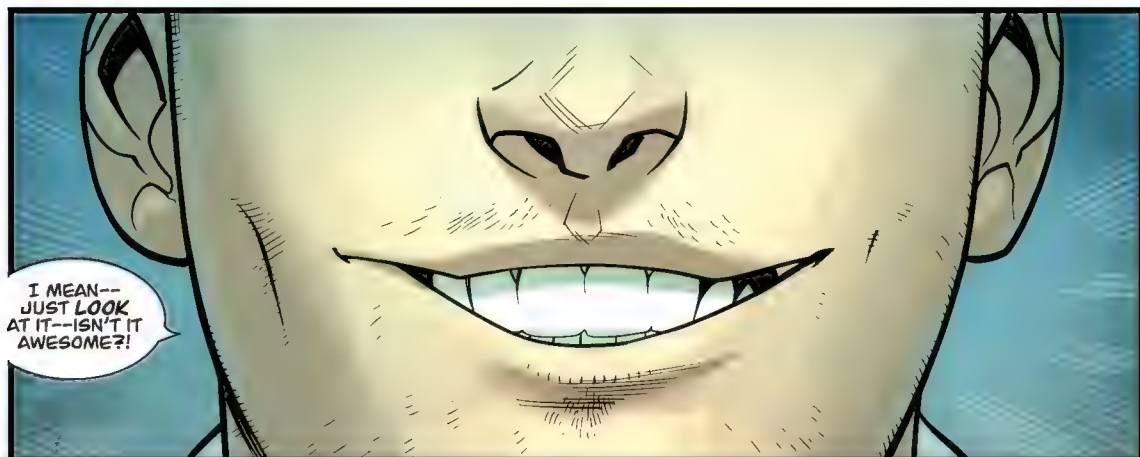










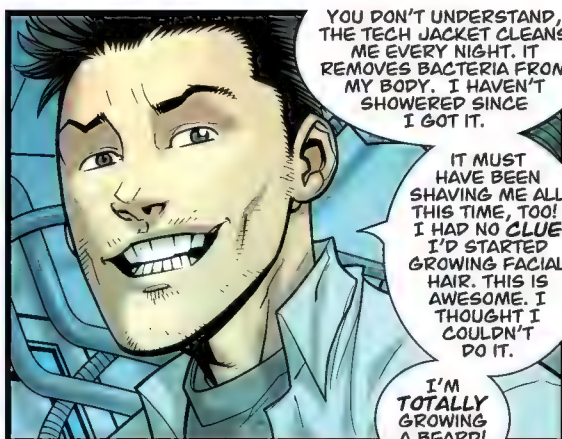


I MEAN--  
JUST LOOK  
AT IT--ISN'T IT  
AWESOME?!



I CAN SEE IT, IT'S  
GREAT... REALLY.  
DO YOU HAVE TO  
KEEP BRINGING IT  
UP? IT'S JUST  
FACIAL HAIR.

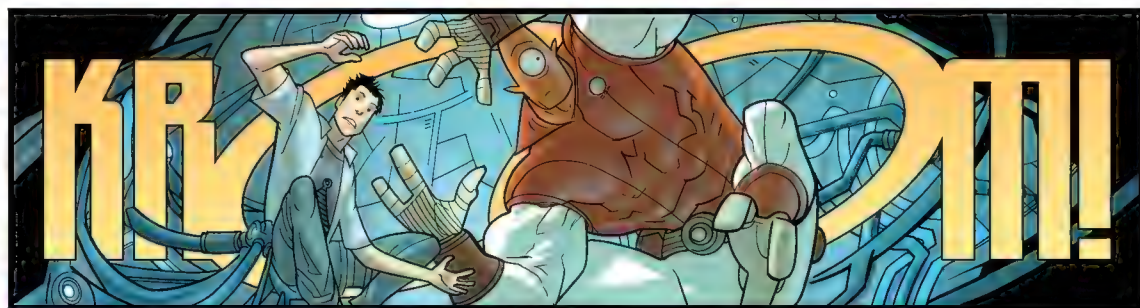
THIS IS  
WORSE THAN  
WHEN YOU WERE  
EXPLAINING  
WHERE YOUR  
EXCREMENT  
WENT...



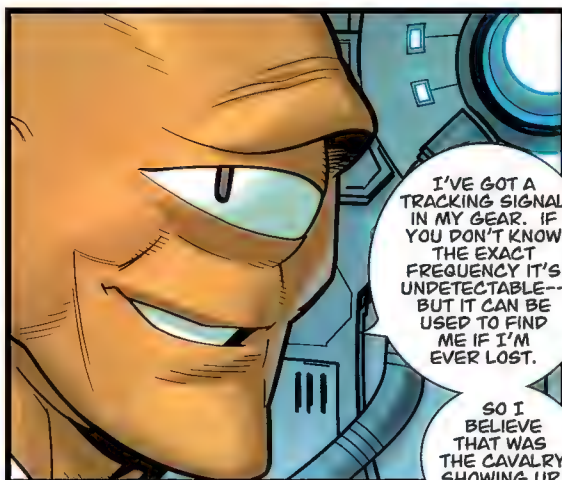
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND.  
THE TECH JACKET CLEANS  
ME EVERY NIGHT. IT  
REMOVES BACTERIA FROM  
MY BODY. I HAVEN'T  
SHOWERED SINCE  
I GOT IT.

IT MUST  
HAVE BEEN  
SHAVING ME ALL  
THIS TIME, TOO!  
I HAD NO CLUE  
I'D STARTED  
GROWING FACIAL  
HAIR. THIS IS  
AWESOME. I  
THOUGHT I  
COULDN'T  
DO IT.

I'M  
TOTALLY  
GROWING  
A BEARD!



WHAT  
THE HECK  
WAS  
THAT?!



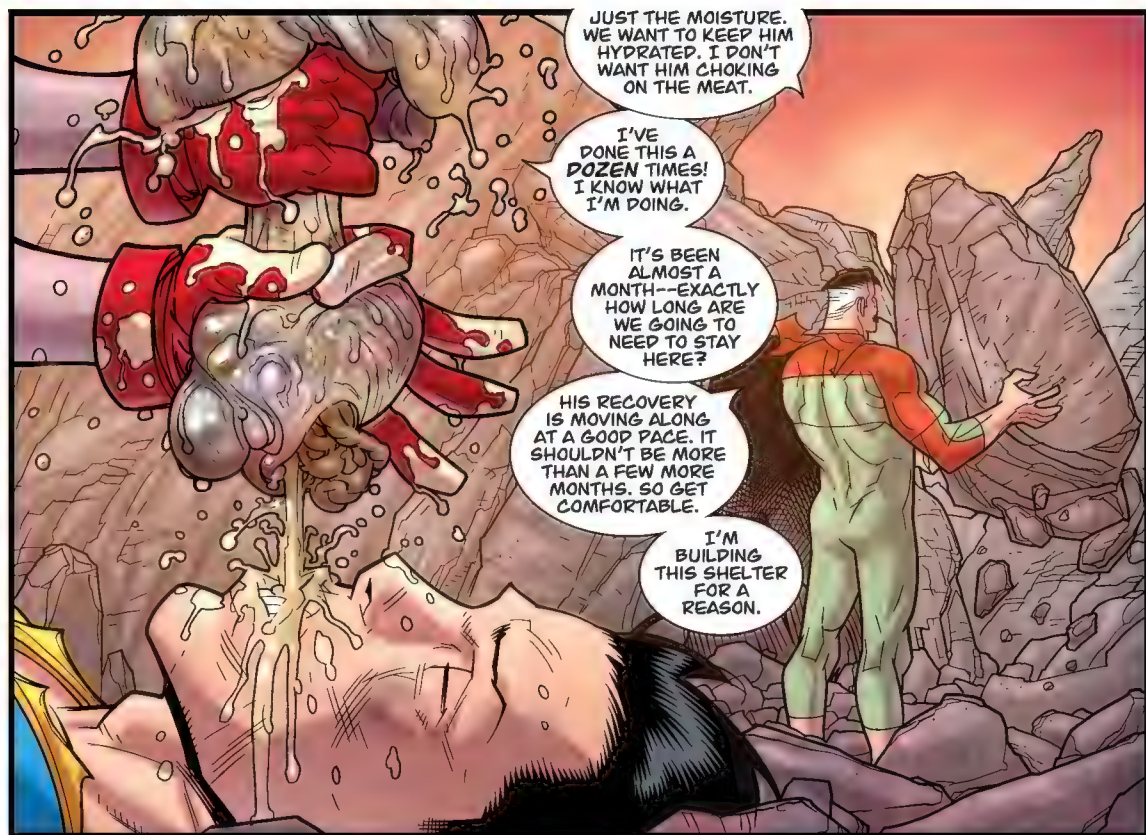
I'VE GOT A  
TRACKING SIGNAL  
IN MY GEAR. IF  
YOU DON'T KNOW  
THE EXACT  
FREQUENCY IT'S  
UNDETECTABLE--  
BUT IT CAN BE  
USED TO FIND  
ME IF I'M  
EVER LOST.

SO I  
BELIEVE  
THAT WAS  
THE CAVALRY  
SHOWING UP.









JUST THE MOISTURE. WE WANT TO KEEP HIM HYDRATED. I DON'T WANT HIM CHOKING ON THE MEAT.

I'VE DONE THIS A DOZEN TIMES! I KNOW WHAT I'M DOING.

IT'S BEEN ALMOST A MONTH--EXACTLY HOW LONG ARE WE GOING TO NEED TO STAY HERE?

HIS RECOVERY IS MOVING ALONG AT A GOOD PACE. IT SHOULDN'T BE MORE THAN A FEW MORE MONTHS. SO GET COMFORTABLE.

I'M BUILDING THIS SHELTER FOR A REASON.



MY MOM, NOT MY REAL MOM, MY EARTH MOM, MARK'S MOM, UH--DEBBIE.

YOU REALLY THINK YOU LOVE HER?



I KNOW I DO.

IT TOOK ME MONTHS OF HEALING IN A VILTRUMITE PRISON TO MAKE ME REALIZE IT... BUT YES, I DO.



WE HAVE AFFECTION, THE VILTRUMITES, BUT WE DON'T CARE FOR EACH OTHER LIKE HUMANS DO. OUR LIVES ARE SO LONG THAT OVER TIME WE GROW DISTANT, IT'S HARD TO FORM A BOND WITH SOMEONE OVER THAT MUCH TIME.

YOU'LL NEVER FIND ONE OF US WHO WILL ADMIT IT-- BUT WE LIVE VERY LONELY, SOLITARY LIVES. ESPECIALLY WITH OUR NUMBERS SO DEPLETED.

LIVING ON EARTH CHANGED ME. SEEING HUMANS GROW SO CLOSE TO EACH OTHER, CARING SO DEEPLY FOR THEIR LOVED ONES IN THE SHORT AMOUNT OF TIME ALLOTTED FOR THEM... IT WAS SPECIAL, SOMETHING TO BE ADMIRRED.





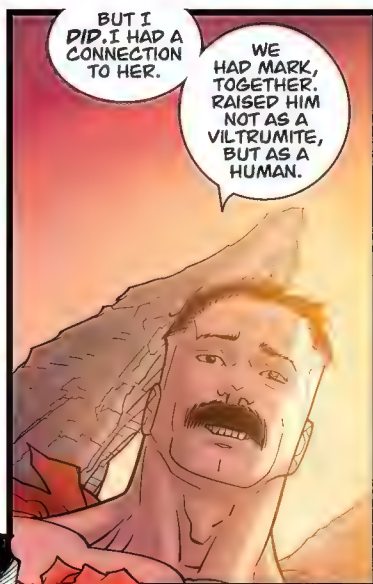
AT FIRST I WAS A SPECTATOR, WATCHING AS THEY LIVED THEIR LIVES. ACTING AS ONE OF THEM, GROWING CLOSE TO DEBBIE, PRETENDING TO FORM A BOND.

BUT WHY HER? DID I JUST PICK HER AT RANDOM?



AT FIRST I THOUGHT I HAD, I TOLD MYSELF THAT WAS THE ONLY WAY.

I COULDN'T ACTUALLY CARE FOR THIS FRAIL CREATURE.



BUT I DID. I HAD A CONNECTION TO HER.

WE HAD MARK, TOGETHER. RAISED HIM NOT AS A VILTRUMITE, BUT AS A HUMAN.



I THOUGHT I WAS BIDDING MY TIME, WAITING TO SEE IF MARK DEVELOPED POWERS... WAITING TO SEE HOW HUMAN DNA MIXED WITH VILTRUMITE DNA... IF HE'D HAVE POWERS AND IF SO, HOW CLOSE TO VILTRUMITE STRENGTH HE WAS.

BUT I NEVER LOOKED AT THAT LIFE AS A CHORE. I ENJOYED IT.

OVER TIME, I FELL INTO THE ROLE OF HUMAN HUSBAND, HUMAN FATHER... SO MUCH SO THAT WHEN MARK GOT HIS POWERS...

...IT WAS A GREAT BURDEN MORE THAN ANYTHING.



I HAD TO GO BACK TO BEING A VILTRUMITE. I HAD TO DO WHAT I WAS PUT THERE TO DO.

WHETHER I WANTED TO OR NOT.



I SPENT A LOT OF TIME ALONE, THEN... CONSIDERING IF I COULD IGNORE MY DUTY, CONTINUE LIVING THE LIE I'D ENJOYED SO MUCH... WITH THE WOMAN I'D GROWN TO LOVE.

IN THE END... I CHOSE TO CARRY OUT MY MISSION... DESPITE HOW CONFLICTED I WAS.



THE DAMAGE I'VE DONE... THE PAIN I'VE CAUSED...

WHEN I LOOKED DOWN AT MARK, SAW HIM... BEATEN BY MY OWN HAND... A VILTRUMITE WOULD HAVE FELT NOTHING... BUT I WAS DEVASTATED.

I KNEW THEN THAT I'D MADE A MISTAKE... BUT I'D ALREADY GONE TOO FAR... IT WAS TOO LATE.





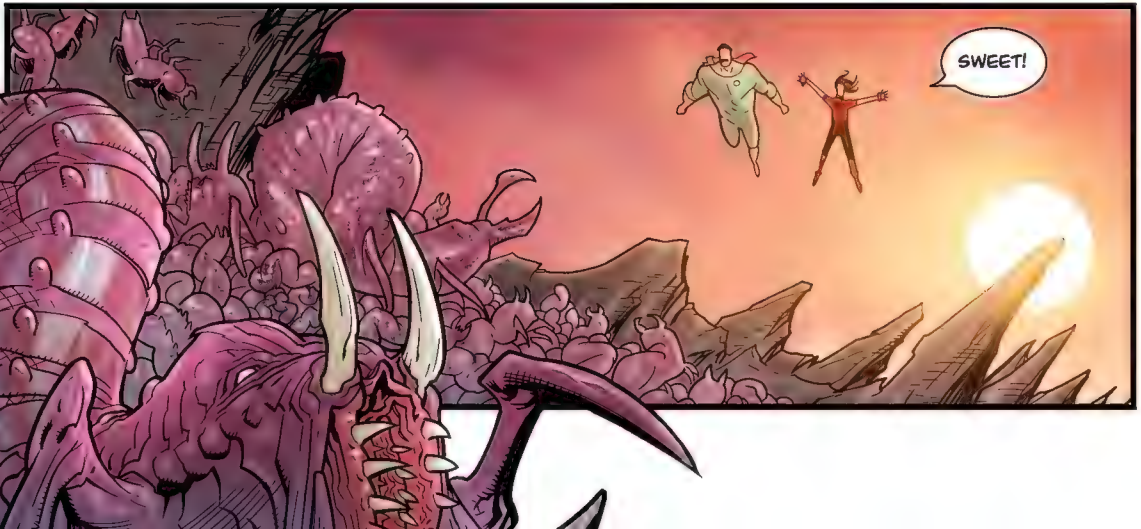
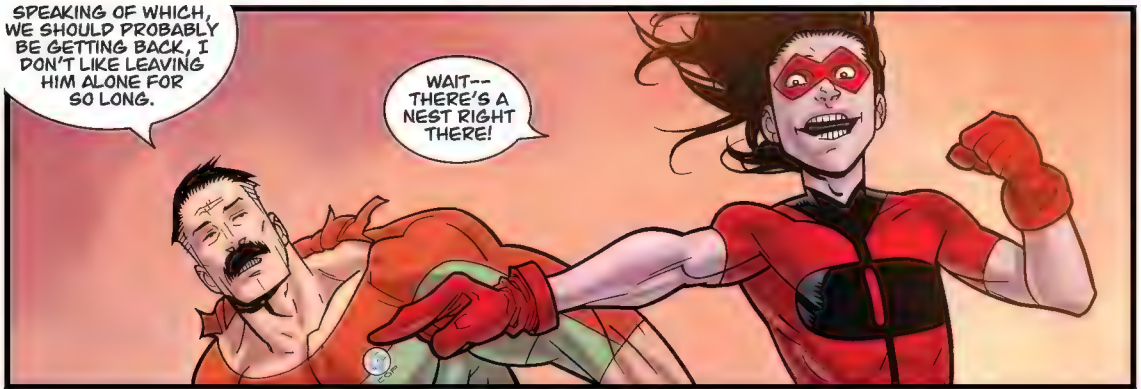




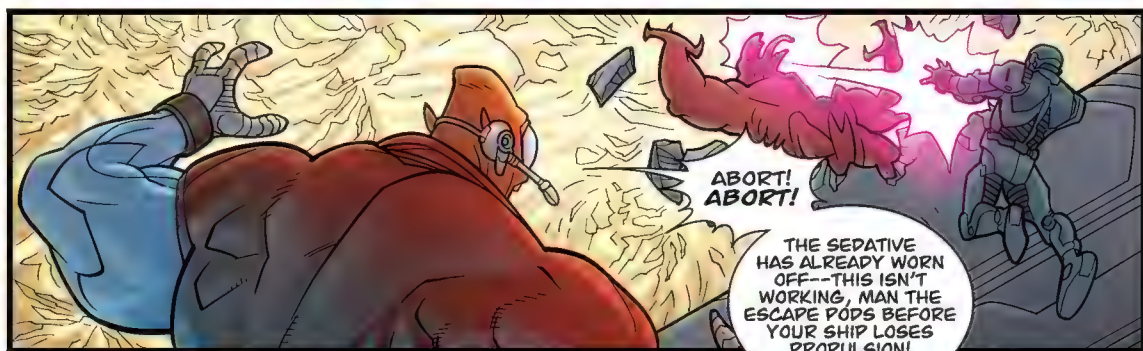
THAT'S ONLY NATURAL. I CAN'T SAY I'VE NEVER FOUND MYSELF SADDENED BY HER PASSING.



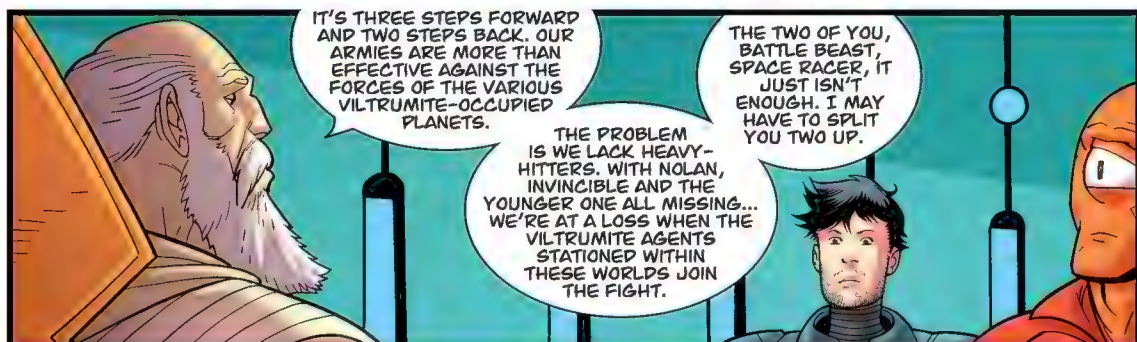
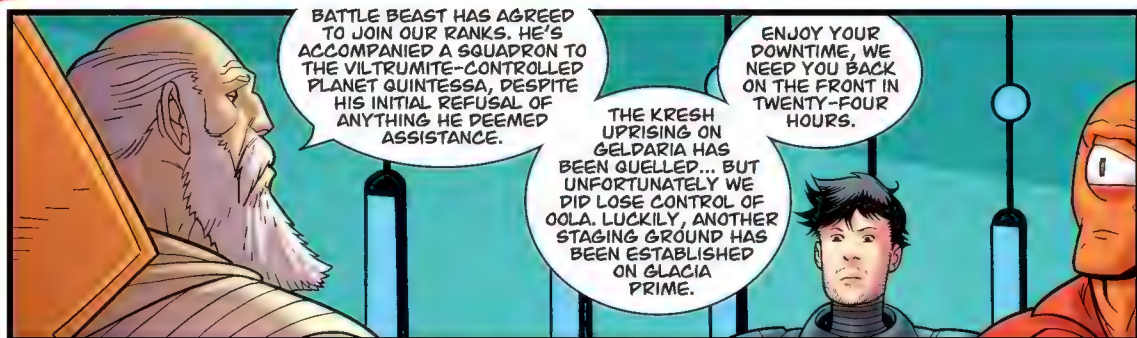
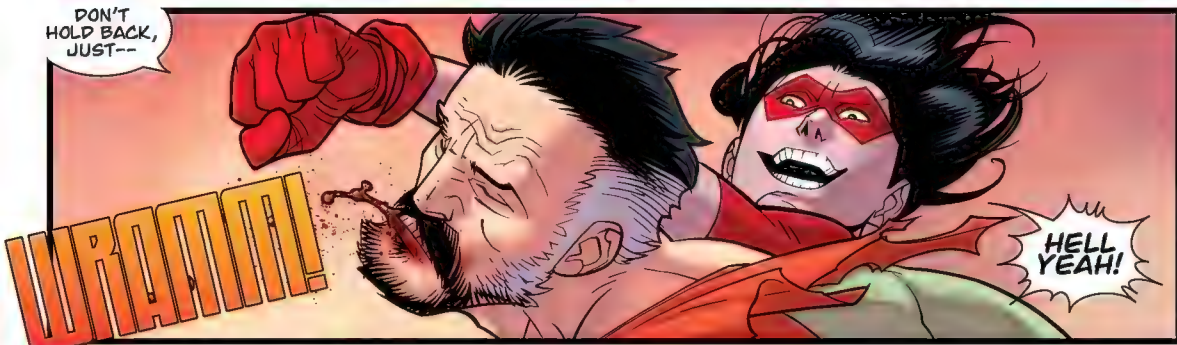
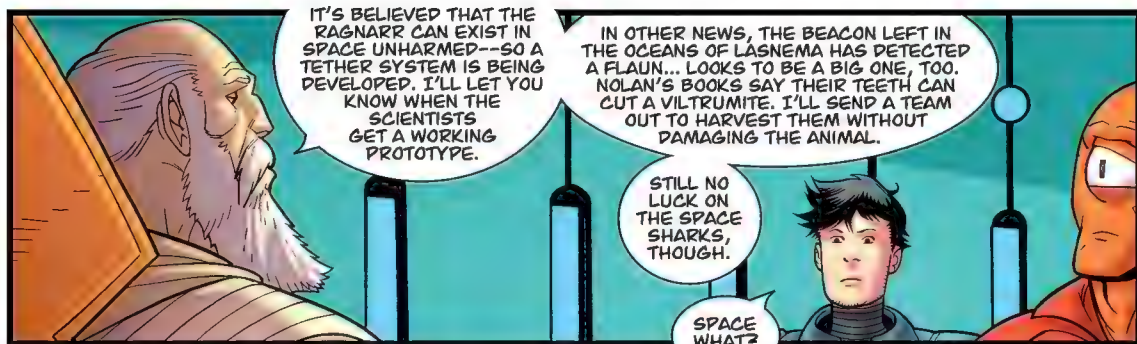
SPEAKING OF WHICH, WE SHOULD PROBABLY BE GETTING BACK, I DON'T LIKE LEAVING HIM ALONE FOR SO LONG.



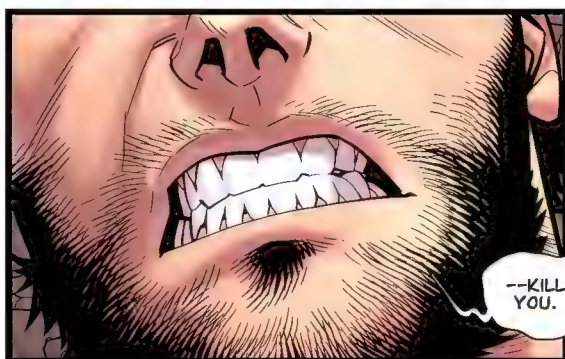
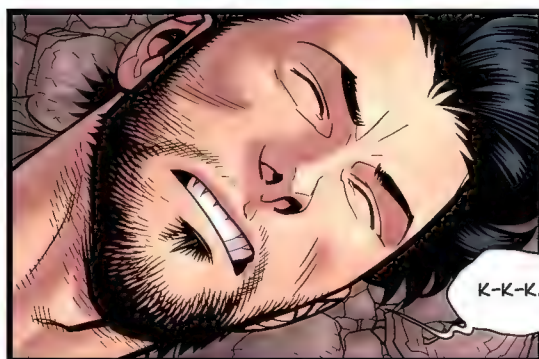
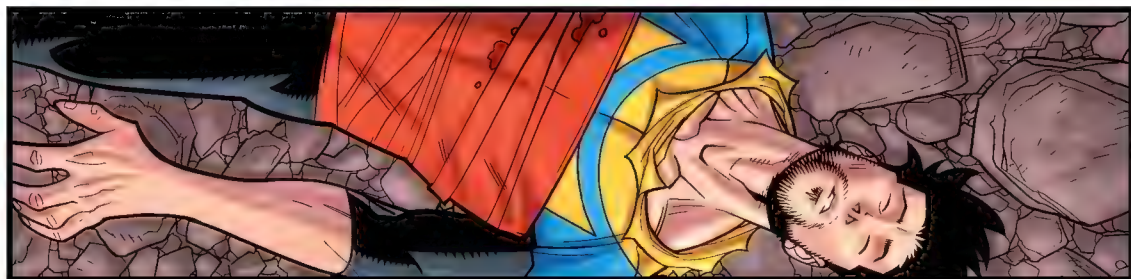
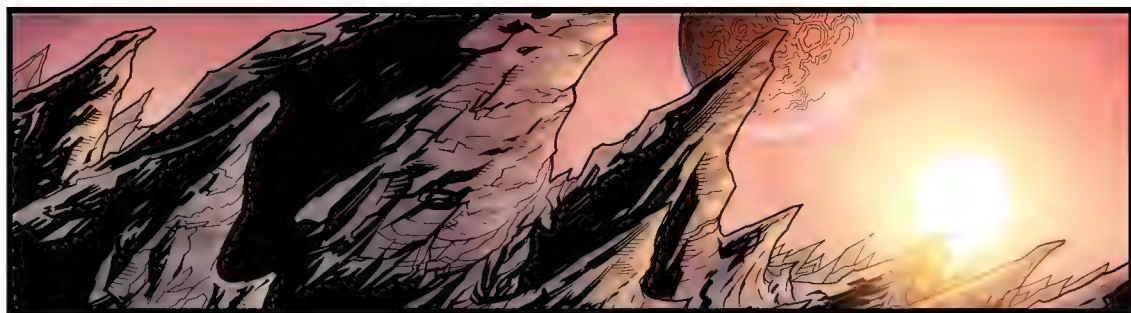
















THE FIGHTING ON DRAKUS MINOR HAS HALTED FOR THE MOMENT. COMMUNICATION COMING IN FROM GELDARIA INDICATES THINGS ARE QUIET IN THAT QUADRANT.

HELLO?

HOW ARE THINGS ON YOUR END?

BATTLE BEAST IS REFUSING A LEAVE PERIOD FOLLOWING HIS VICTORY OVER THE VILTRUMITES ON QUINTESSA. THAT ONE IS VERY DEDICATED.

YOU'VE BEEN FEEDING US INFORMATION FOR YEARS-- BUT IT'S NOT ENOUGH. WE ARE STILL LOSING PLANETS TO THE COALITION.

THAT IS UNACCEPTABLE.

WE WILL STRIKE THE COALITION HEADQUARTERS ON TALESCRIA. YOU WILL SHUT DOWN THEIR DEFENSES AT THE TIME BEING TRANSMITTED TO YOU.

RESPOND.

IT WILL BE DONE.

WHAT? WHAT WILL BE DONE?

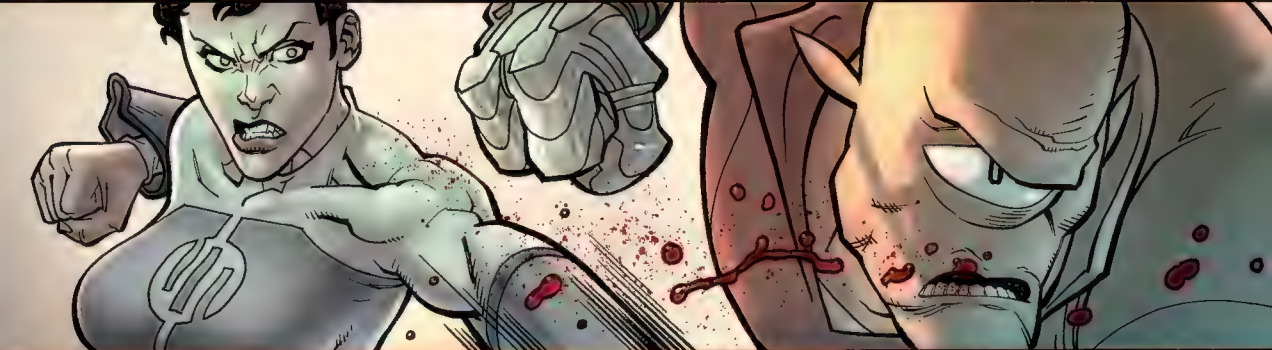
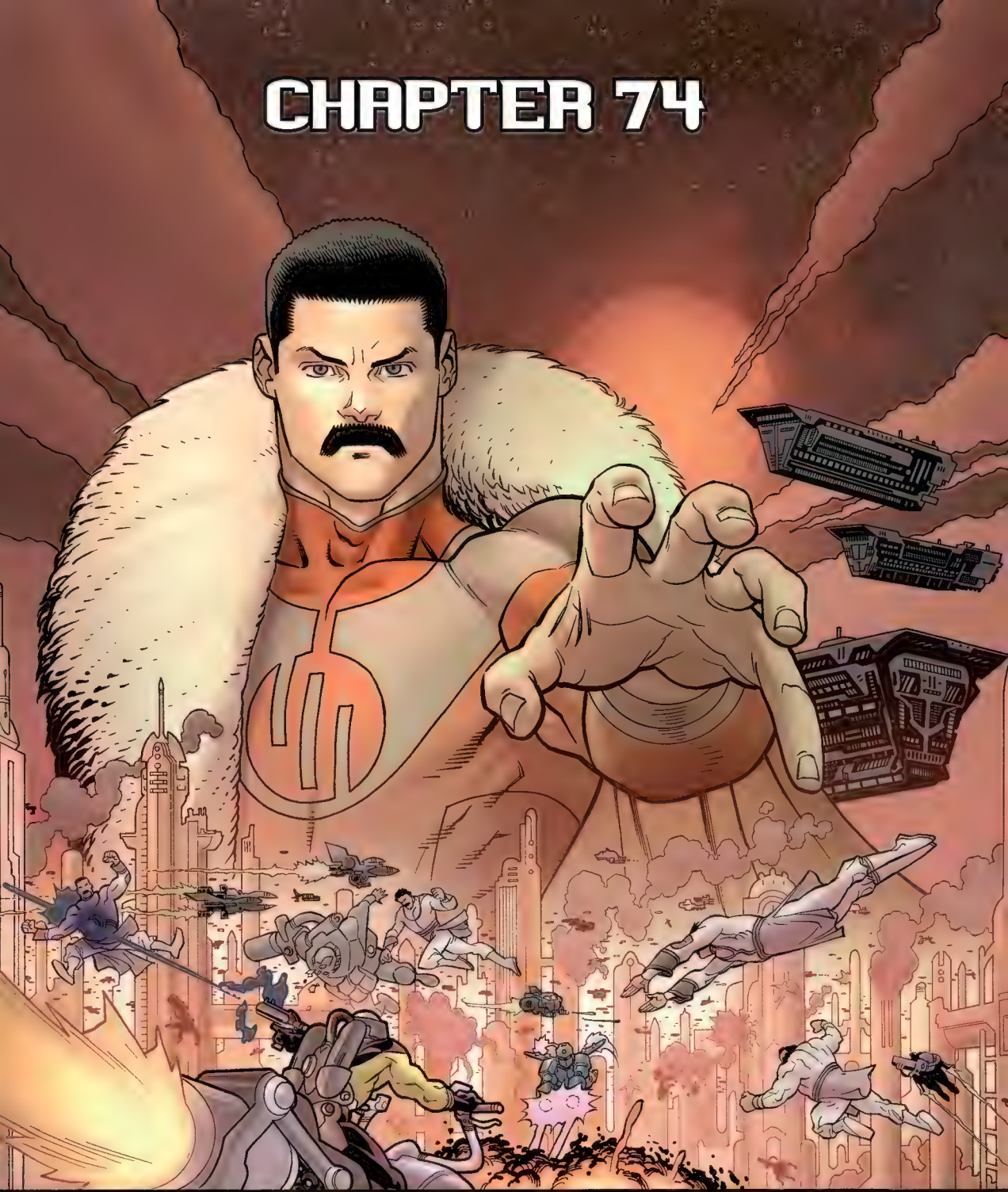
WHO ARE YOU TALKING TO?







# CHAPTER 74





TALESCRIA.

I THANK YOU ALL FOR ATTENDING THIS ASSEMBLY. I KNOW THAT YOU ARE ALL ENDURING A GREAT MANY HARDSHIPS DURING THIS WAR WITH THE VILTRUMITES.

I URGE YOU TO PUT YOUR FAITH IN THIS COALITION OF PLANETS THAT WE HAVE FORMED TOGETHER. AS ONE UNIT, WE ARE STRONG--STRONG ENOUGH TO WITHSTAND THESE TRIALS WE NOW FACE.

I KNOW SOME OF YOU HAVE QUESTIONED MY JUDGMENT IN STARTING THIS VILTRUMITE WAR... I ASSURE YOU OUR TIME TO STRIKE WAS UPON US.

I CAN NOW REVEAL TO YOU THAT THE VILTRUM AGENT KNOWN AS NOLAN HAS DEFECTED AND WAS WORKING WITH US, GATHERING ITEMS KNOWN TO BE CAPABLE OF INJURING VILTRUMITES.



YOUR  
ARMIES HAVE  
BEEN EQUIPPED  
WITH WEAPONS  
DEVELOPED USING  
THESE ITEMS THAT HAVE  
BEEN RECOVERED. THAT  
IS HOW WE'VE BEEN  
ABLE TO HOLD THE  
VILTRUMITE  
FORCES AT  
BAY.

I REGRET  
TO INFORM YOU  
THAT THE LYNCHPIN  
OF OUR PLAN, NOLAN  
AND HIS TWO VILTRUMITE  
SONS, HAVE GONE  
MISSING, AND WILL NOT  
BE PROVIDING US WITH  
THE ASSISTANCE WE  
WERE COUNTING  
ON.

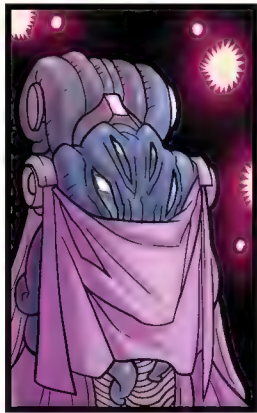
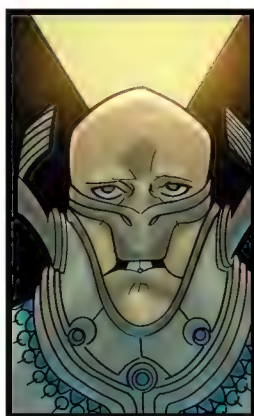
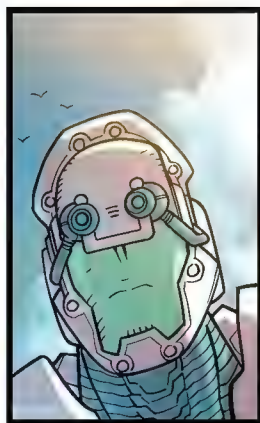
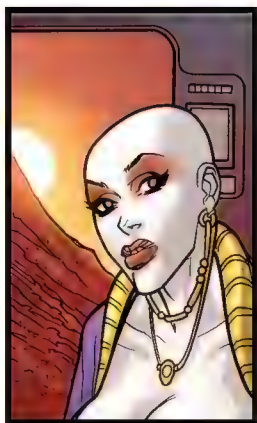
BUT FEAR  
NOT, AS LONG  
AS WE CONTINUE  
TO WORK  
TOGETHER, AS A  
UNIFIED FRONT  
AGAINST THE  
VILTRUMITES--  
WE WILL  
SUCCEED.

WE WILL  
FINALLY RID  
THE UNIVERSE  
OF THIS  
SCOURGE  
ONCE AND  
FOR ALL.

WE--





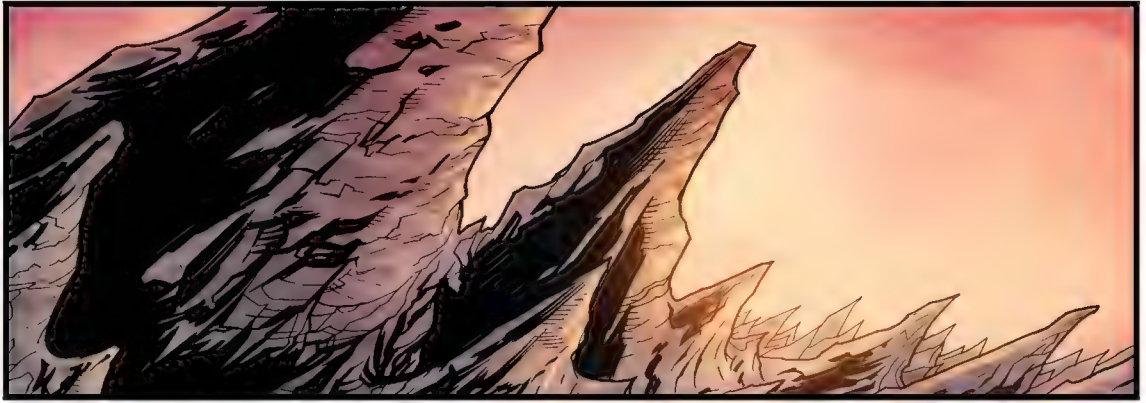






MR. OOM!





...I'M STILL VERY YOUNG BY THEIR STANDARDS, NOT THAT HUMAN KIDS MY CURRENT AGE DON'T HAVE RELATIONSHIPS OF SOME KIND. IT'S JUST... THEIR PARAMETERS OF ATTRACTION ARE SO NARROW.

I REMEMBER MY TIME ON THRAXA... I REMEMBER THOSE PEOPLE... FINDING SOME OF THEM TO BE ATTRACTIVE, EVEN AS YOUNG AS I WAS.

THERE'S NOTHING LIKE THAT ON EARTH. I FIND SOME EARTH PEOPLE ATTRACTIVE, BUT IT'S ONLY THE MOST UNIQUE AMONG THEM.



MOTHER TOOK ME TO A RESTAURANT ONE TIME THAT HAD A LOBSTER TANK...

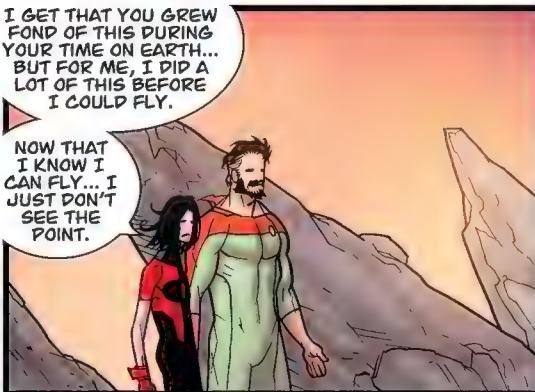


I MEAN, I STILL ATE ONE... BUT I THOUGHT IT WAS... BEAUTIFUL.



THERE ARE SOME GIRLS I COULD INTRODUCE YOU TO ON TALESCRIA. THE DAUGHTER OF THE WOMAN WHO LIVES NEXT TO ME IN MY BUILDING HAS A... SIMILAR APPEARANCE.

HAVE YOU ENJOYED YOUR WALK?



I GET THAT YOU GREW FOND OF THIS DURING YOUR TIME ON EARTH... BUT FOR ME, I DID A LOT OF THIS BEFORE I COULD FLY.

NOW THAT I KNOW I CAN FLY... I JUST DON'T SEE THE POINT.



IT'S ALL ABOUT PERSPECTIVE. YOU SEE THINGS DIFFERENTLY WHEN--

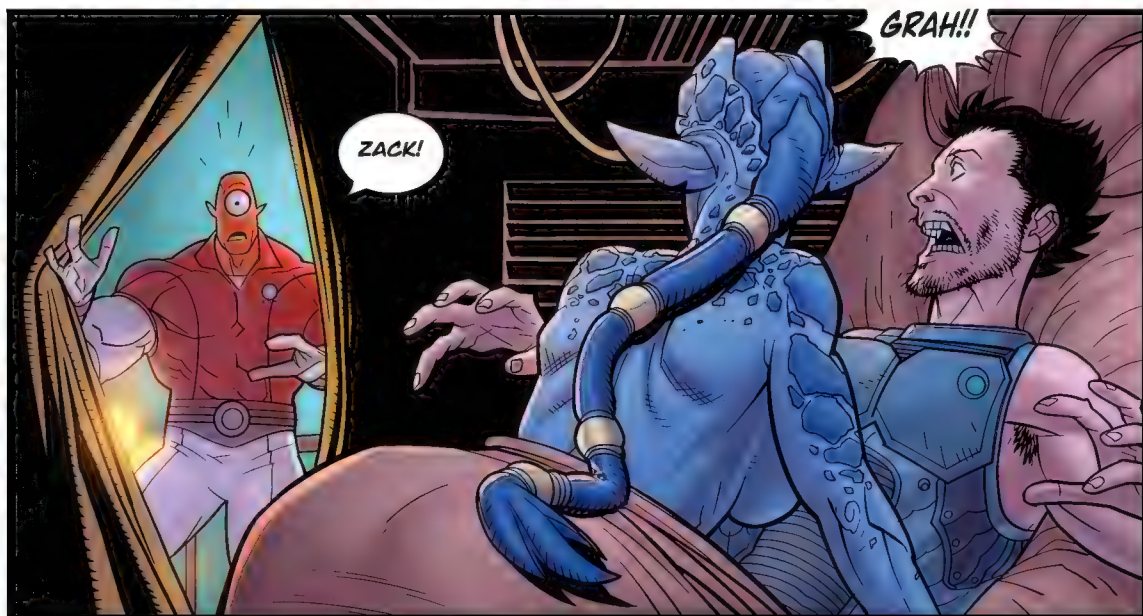
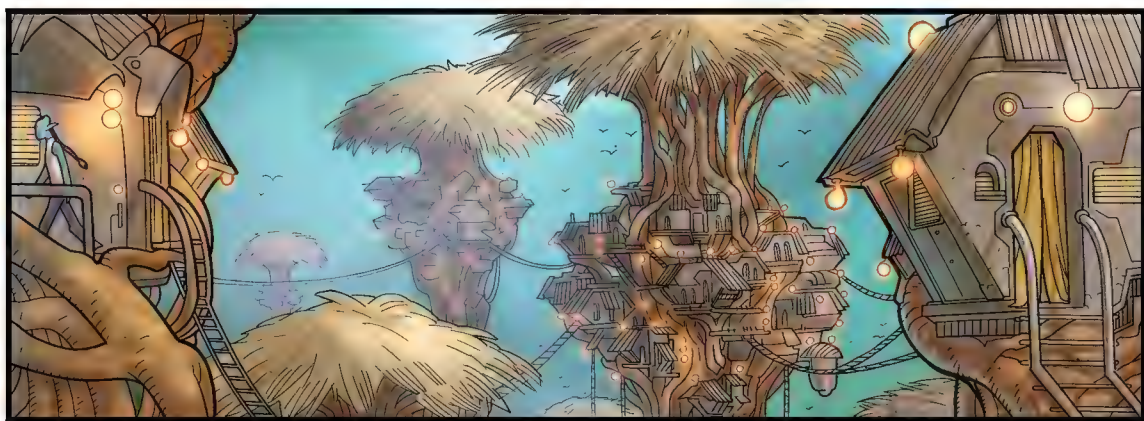
DAD?

AHEAD, IN THE CAMP. WHAT IS--?

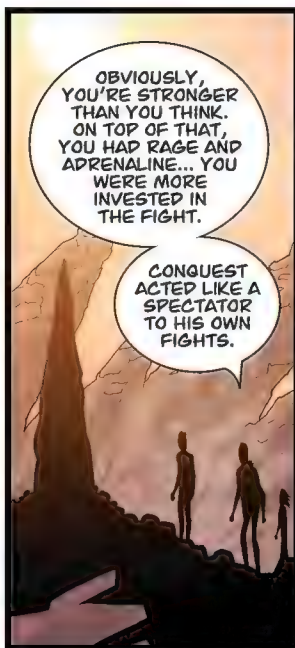




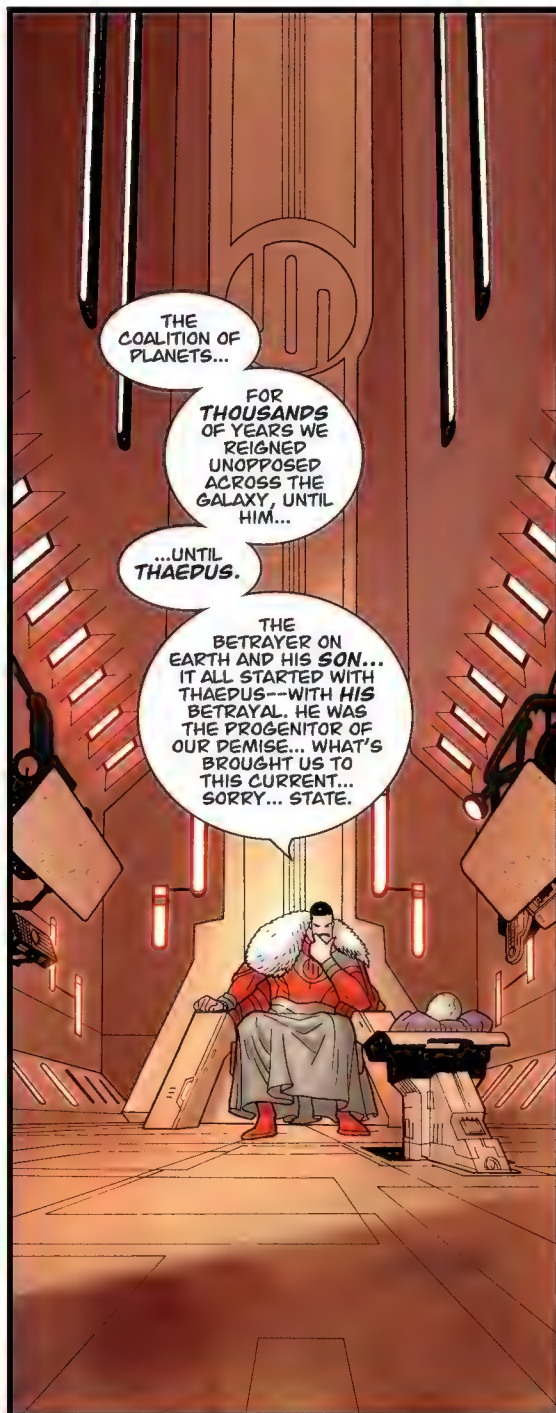
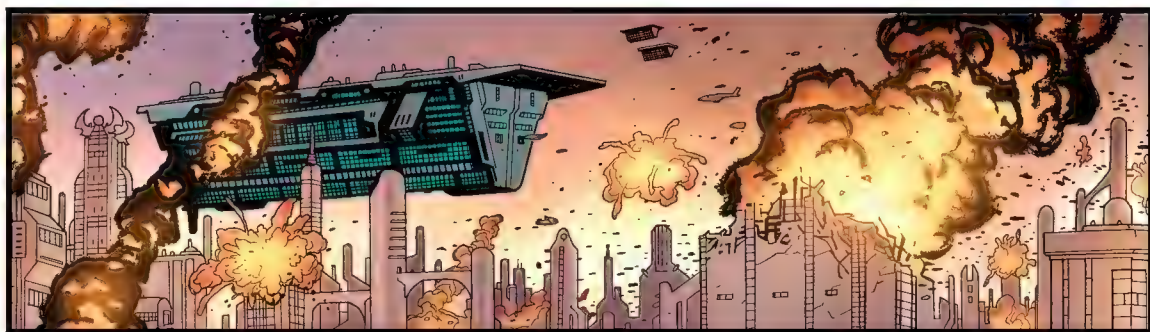












THE  
COALITION OF  
PLANETS...

FOR  
THOUSANDS  
OF YEARS WE  
REIGNED  
UNOPPOSED  
ACROSS THE  
GALAXY, UNTIL  
HIM...

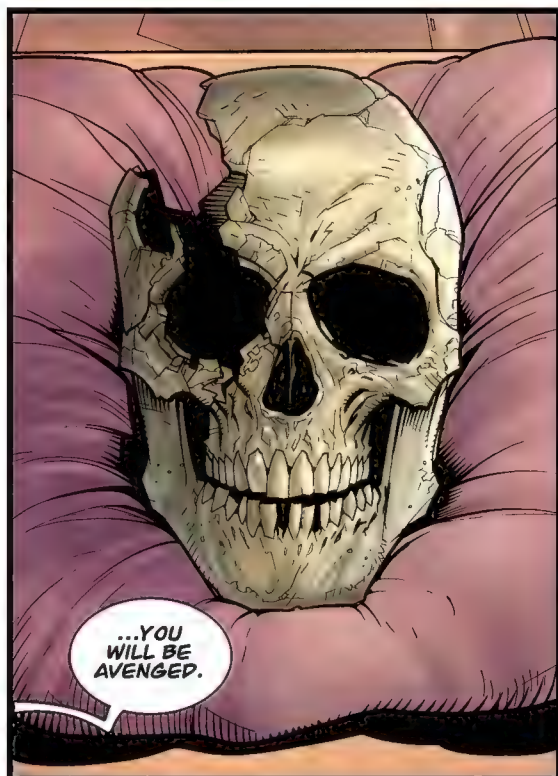
...UNTIL  
THAEDUS.

THE  
BETRAYER ON  
EARTH AND HIS SON...  
IT ALL STARTED WITH  
THAEDUS--WITH HIS  
BETRAYAL. HE WAS  
THE PROGENITOR OF  
OUR DEMISE... WHAT'S  
BROUGHT US TO  
THIS CURRENT...  
SORRY... STATE.

AS THE BATTLE RAGES  
ACROSS OUR PLANETS--  
OUR CONTROL OF THE  
GALAXY BEGINS SLIPPING  
THROUGH OUR GRASP--  
WE HAVE BROUGHT  
THE FIGHT TO HIM...  
TO TALESCRIA.

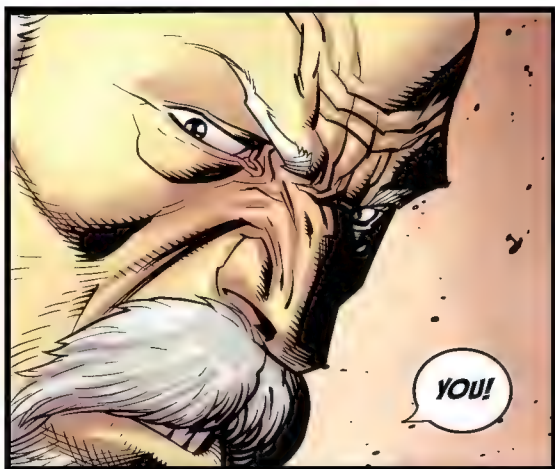
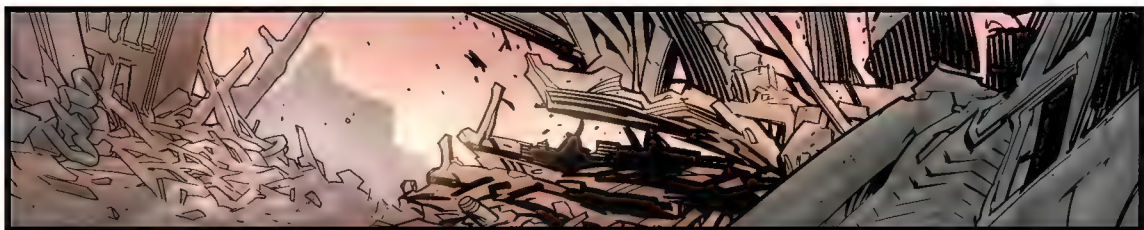
WITH THAEDUS  
DEAD AND THE  
COALITION IN DISARRAY,  
THIS WAR WILL BE  
OVER, WE WILL BE  
THE VICTORS.

AND  
YOU, MY  
LIEGE...

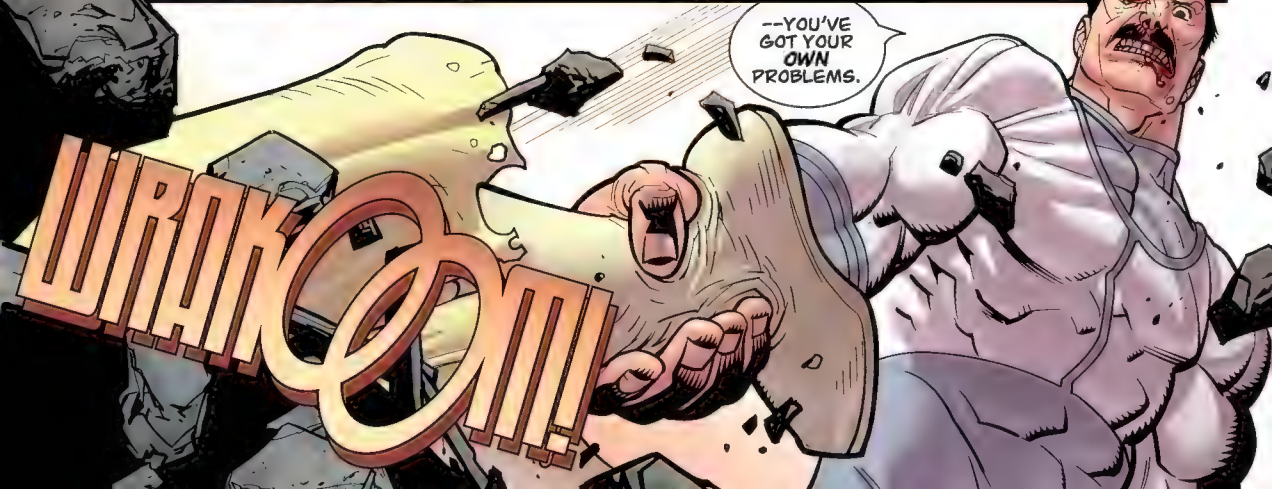
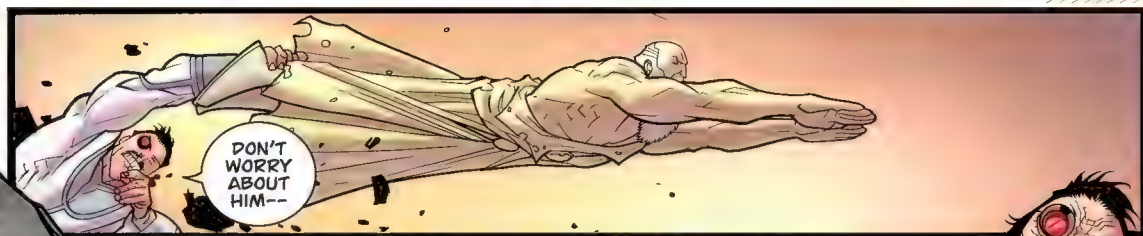
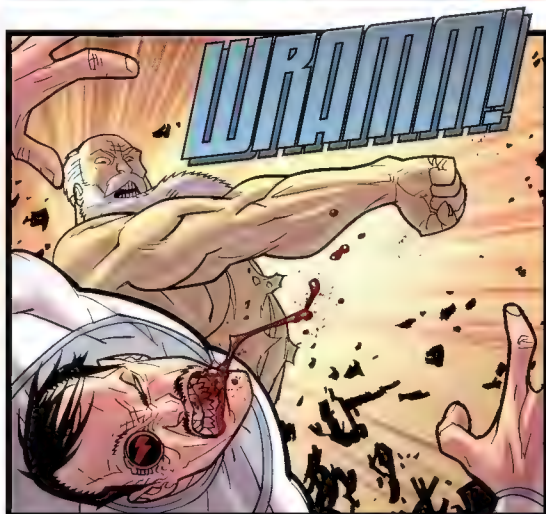
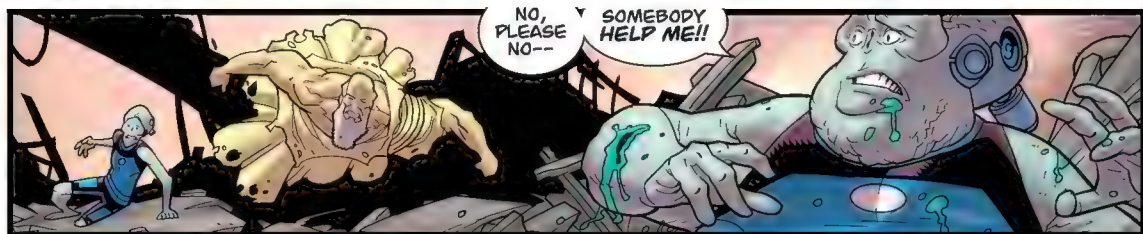


...YOU  
WILL BE  
AVENGED.

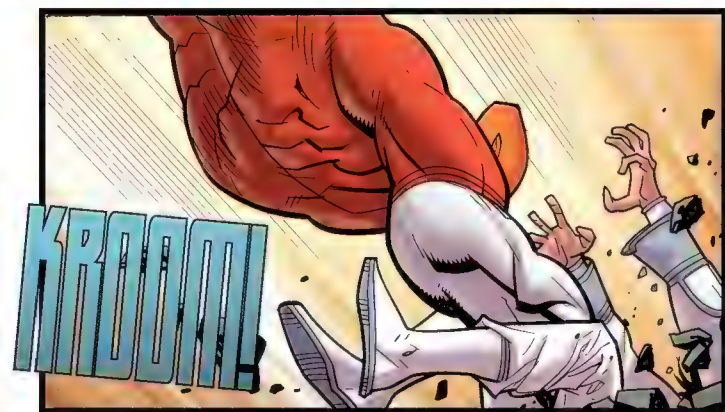
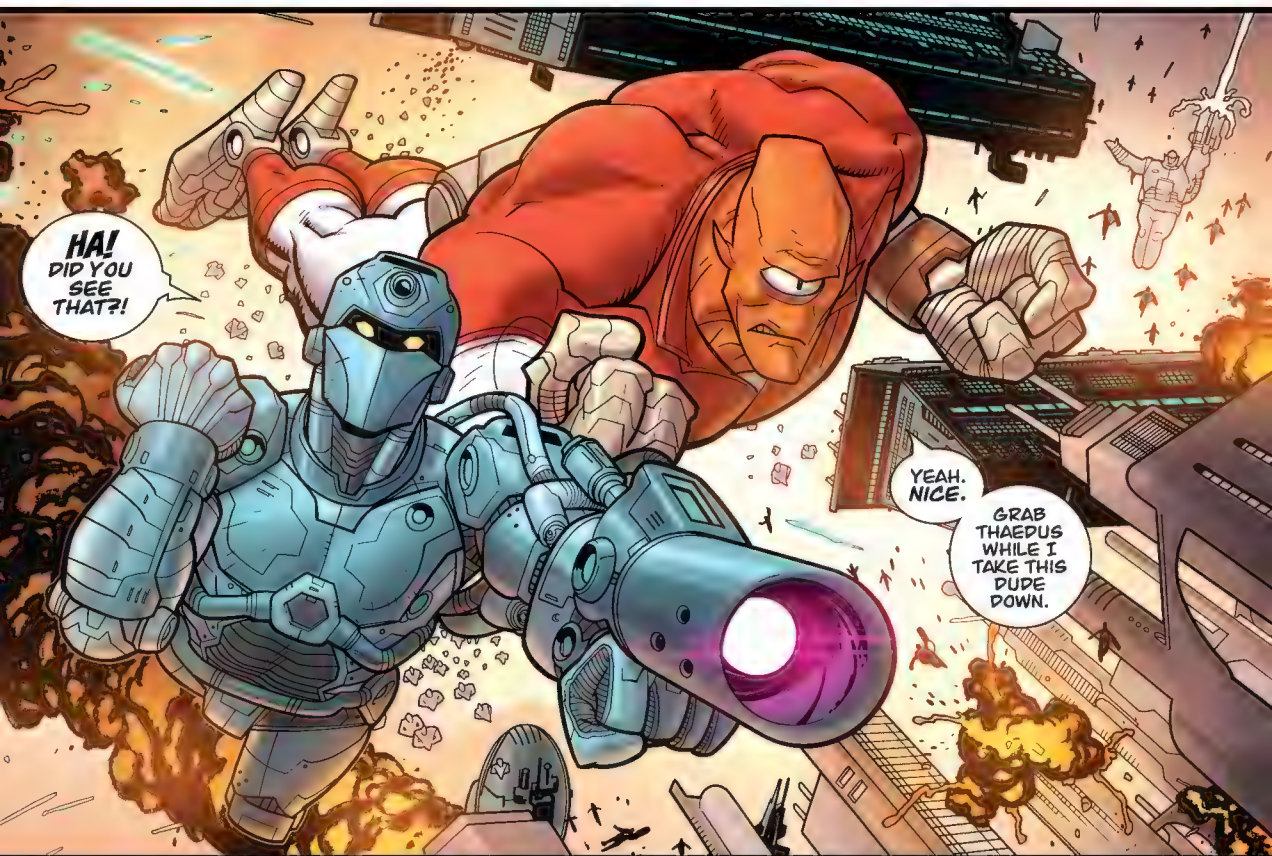
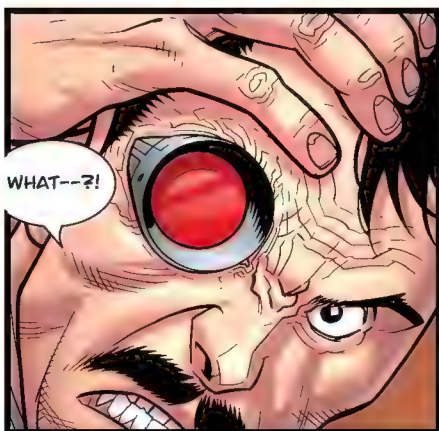
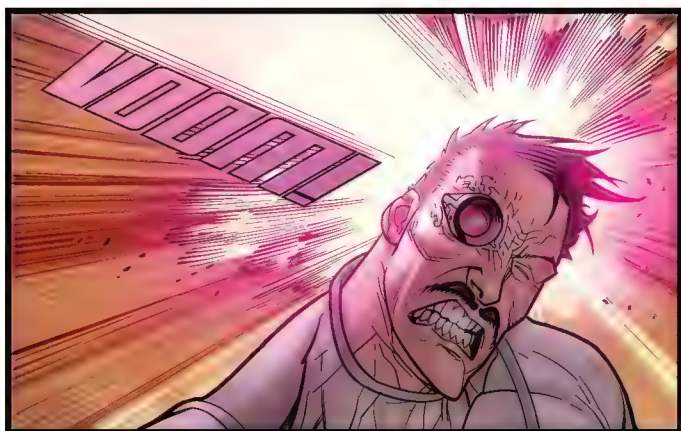




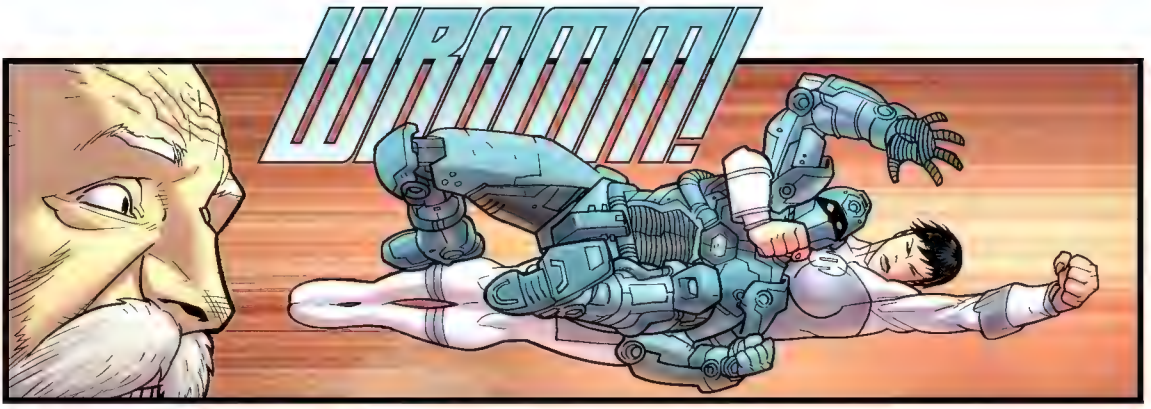












I'LL SEE YOUR WEAK BODY SPILL THROUGH THE SEAMS OF YOUR TECHNOLOGY, GELDARIAN!

EXTERIOR PRESSURE AT 90% CAPACITY, BREACH IMMINENT.



FOOLISH UNOPAN, YOU DEFY US EVEN AS YOUR BELOVED COALITION CRUMBLES AROUND YOU!

DUDE, YOU'RE CLUELESS--WE'VE GOT YOUR CRAPPY EMPIRE ON THE ROPES!

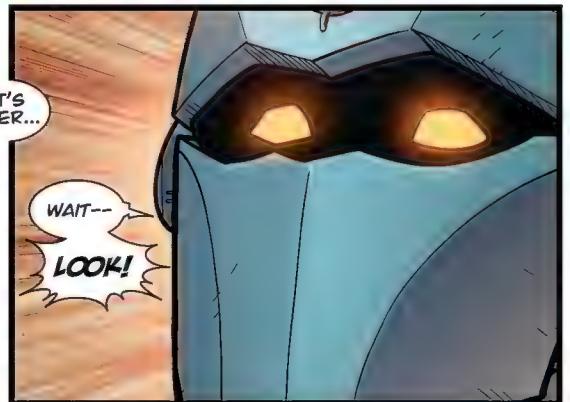


BEFORE SHE GETS UP--WE GOTTA HELP ALLEN.

NO, ALLEN CAN TAKE CARE OF HIMSELF. WE MUST FLEE, GATHER WHAT TROOPS WE CAN TO REGROUP. OUR CAUSE IS ALL BUT LOST.

I NEVER CONSIDERED THEY'D FIND US HERE--I'VE SPREAD US TOO THIN...

IT'S OVER...

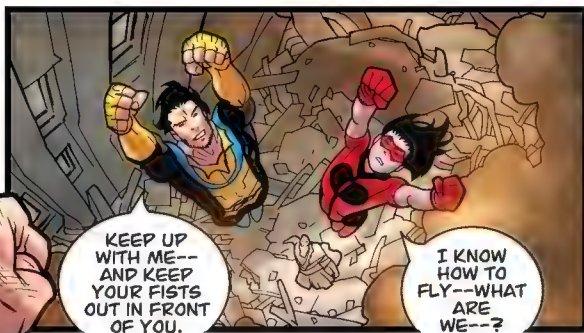


WAIT--  
LOOK!

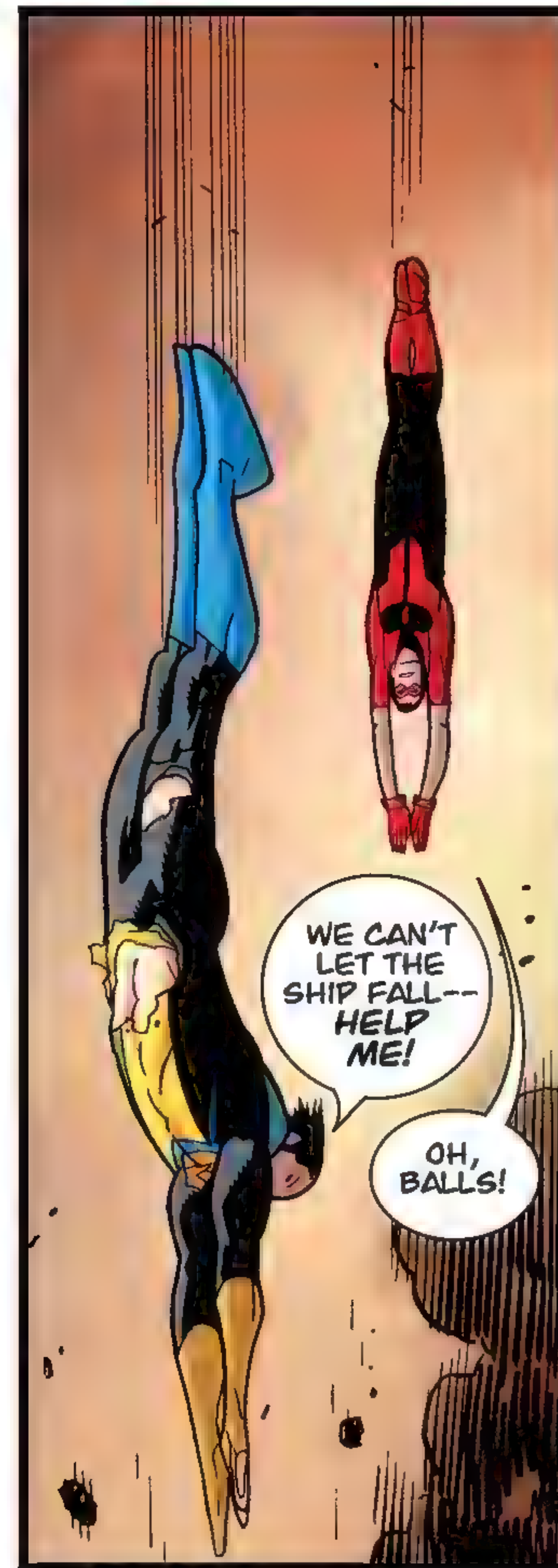
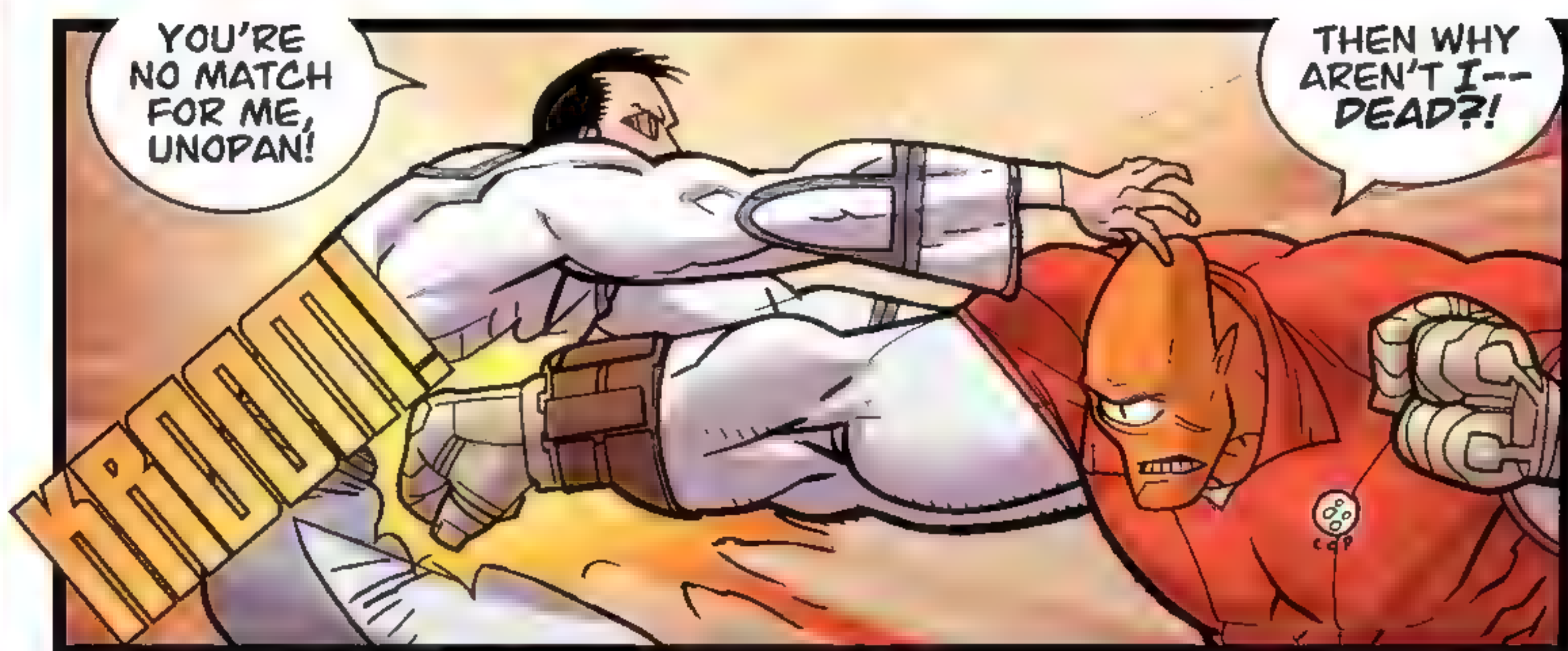
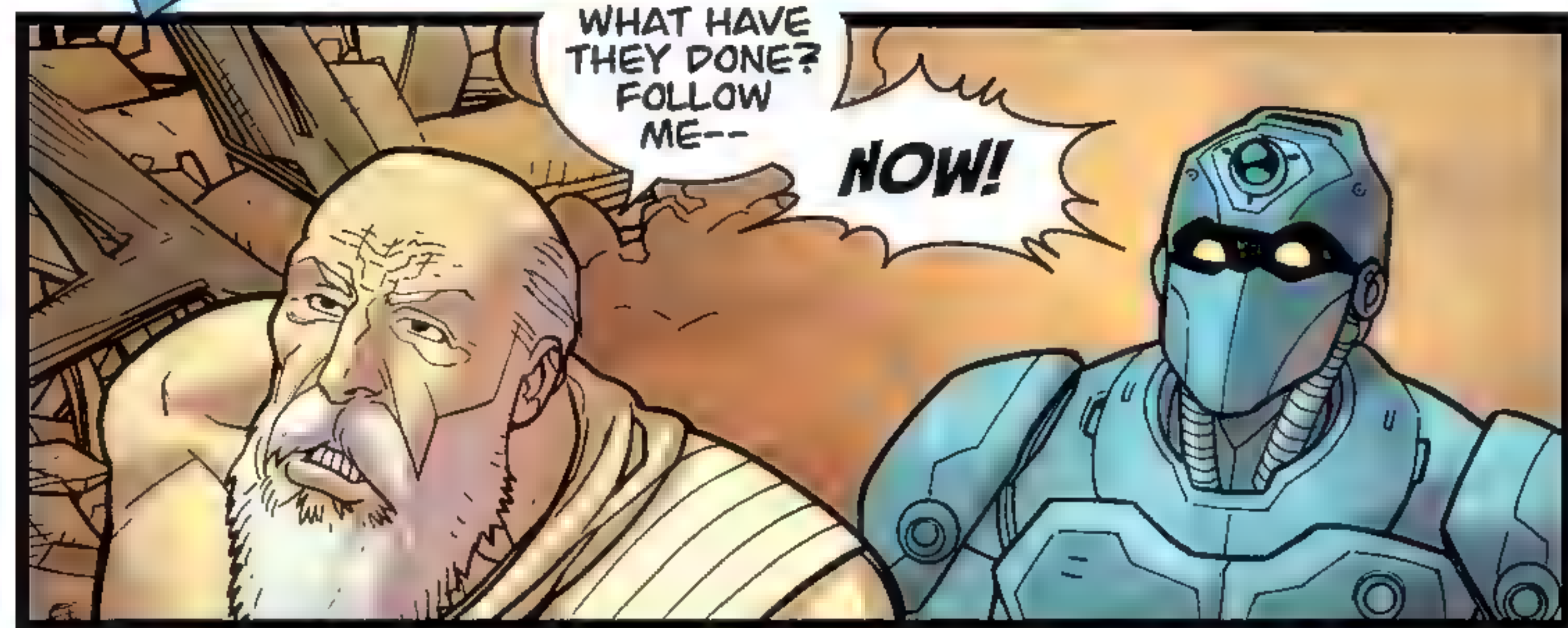
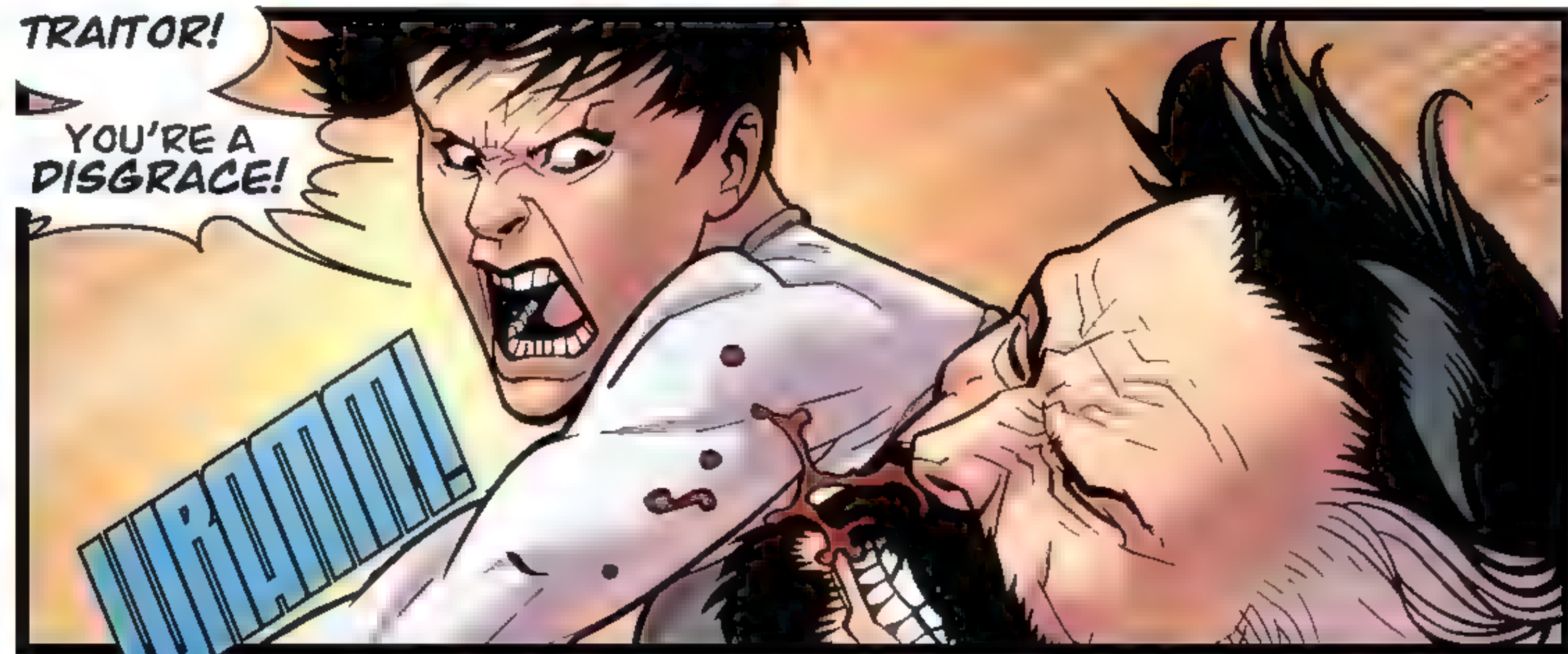
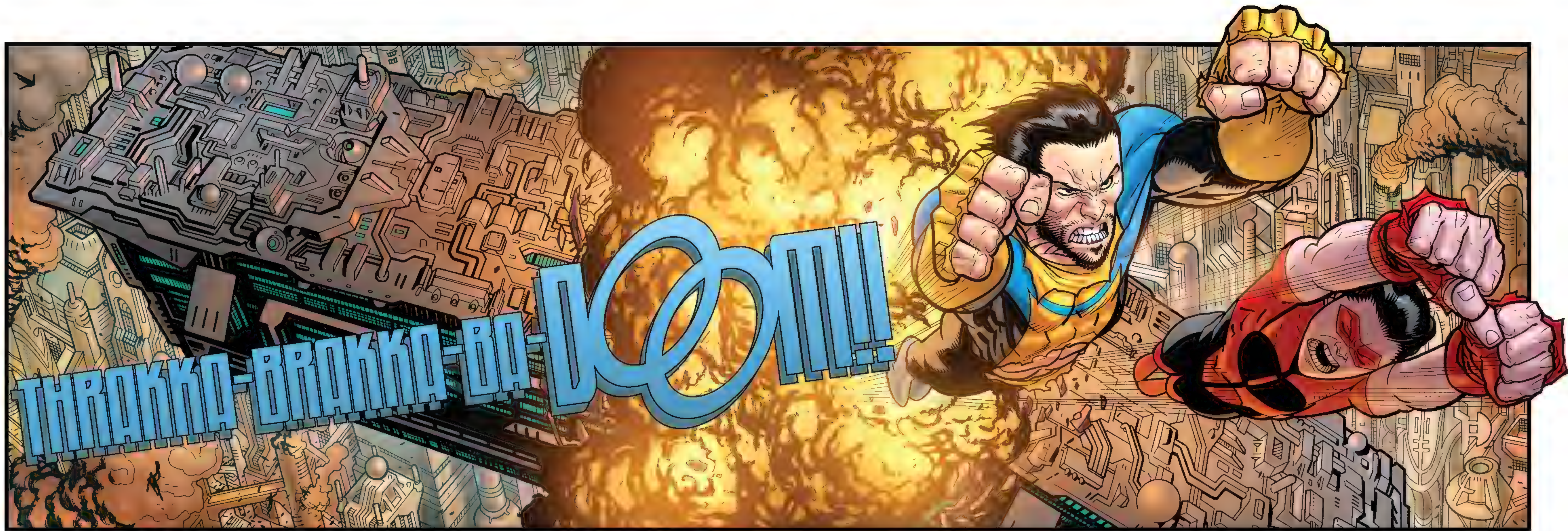




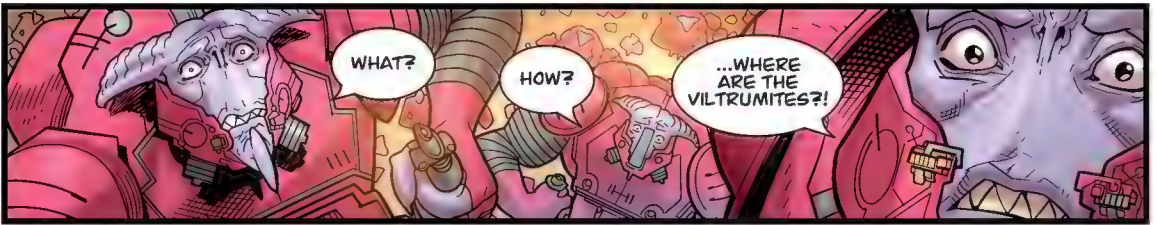
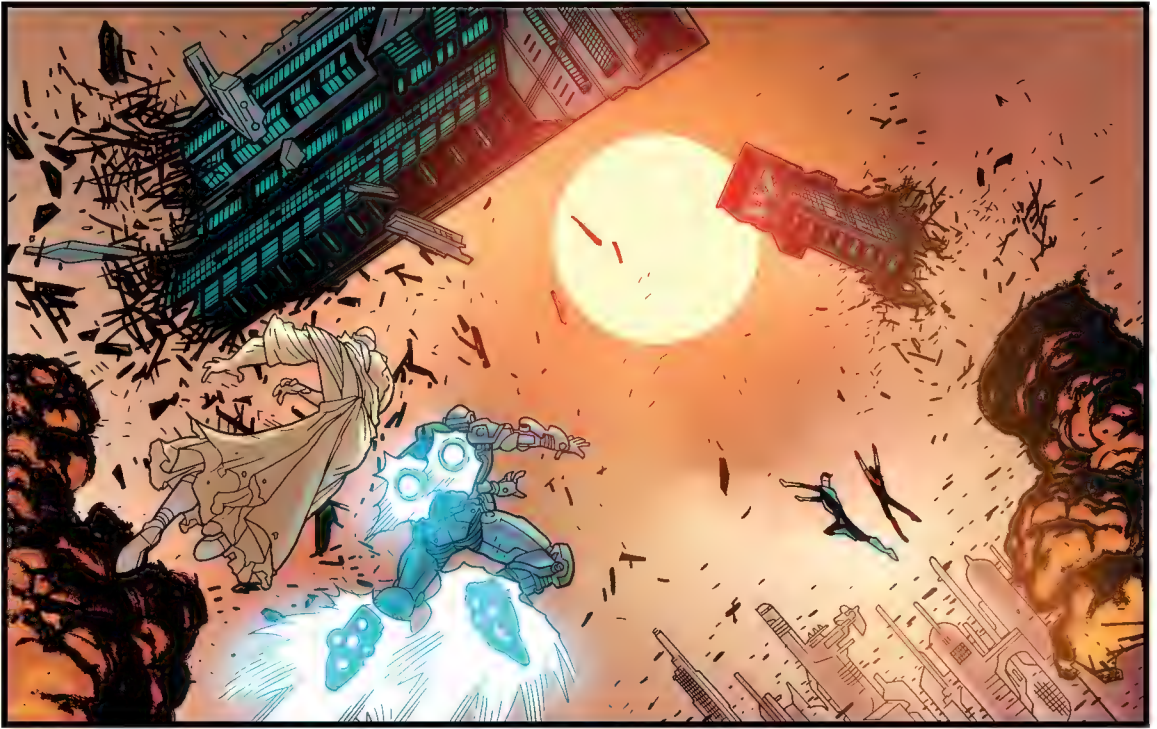




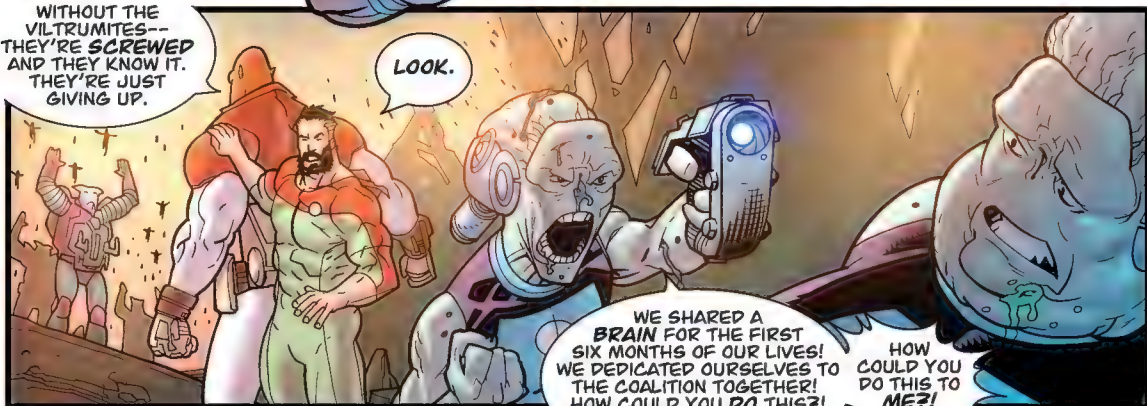
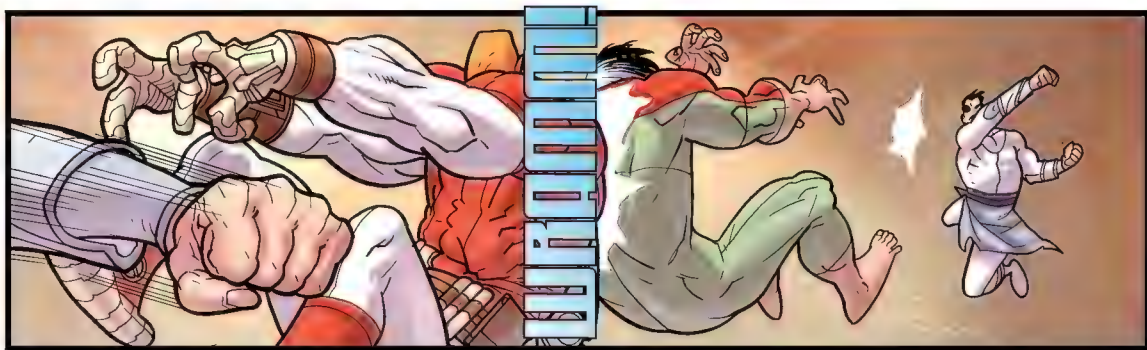
















LOOK WHAT YOU MADE  
ME DO! YOU THINK I  
WANTED THIS?! I CAN'T  
BELIEVE YOU WERE  
WORKING FOR  
THEM!

TALK! TELL ME WHAT THE  
VILTRUMITES' PLANS ARE!  
TELL ME EVERYTHING  
YOU KNOW.



DON'T  
MAKE ME  
SHOOT YOU  
AGAIN!



ENOUGH.

LOOK WHAT YOU'VE DONE--  
YOU BROUGHT THEM HERE,  
YOU CAUSED THIS  
DESTRUCTION--YOU'VE  
BETRAYED US ALL.

YOU WILL  
PAY FOR THESE  
CRIMES--BUT  
FIRST, TELL US  
WHERE THE  
VILTRUMITES ARE  
GOING--RIGHT  
NOW.

DOESN'T MATTER  
NOW--DOESN'T  
MATTER AT  
ALL.

IT'S TOO  
LATE, YOU'VE  
GOT NO HOPE  
OF WINNING  
THIS WAR.  
THEY SAID--  
THEY--

IF THIS BATTLE  
WAS LOST, THEY  
WERE TO RECONVENE  
ON THE PLANET  
VILTRUM TO STAGE  
A COUNTER-  
ATTACK.

YOU DON'T  
STAND A  
CHANCE. THEY'RE  
ALL GOING  
THERE--

ALL OF  
THEM.

IT'S  
OVER.

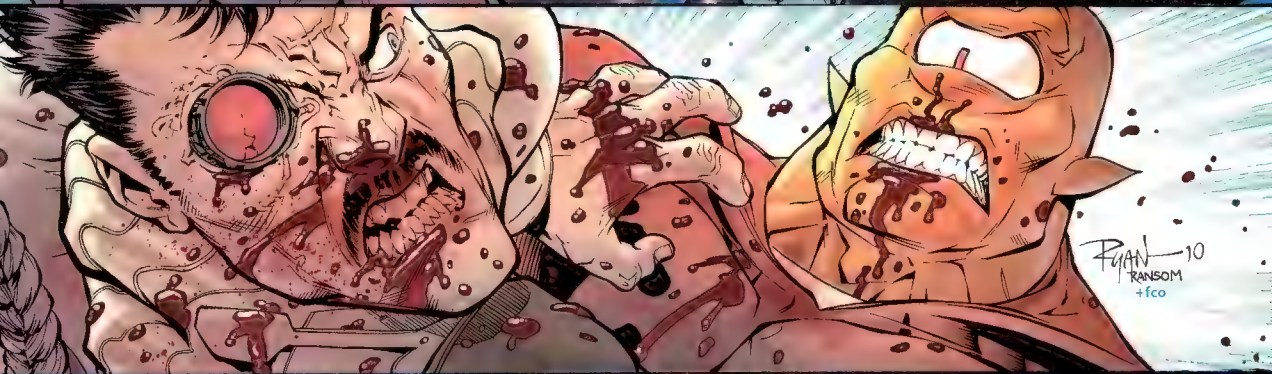






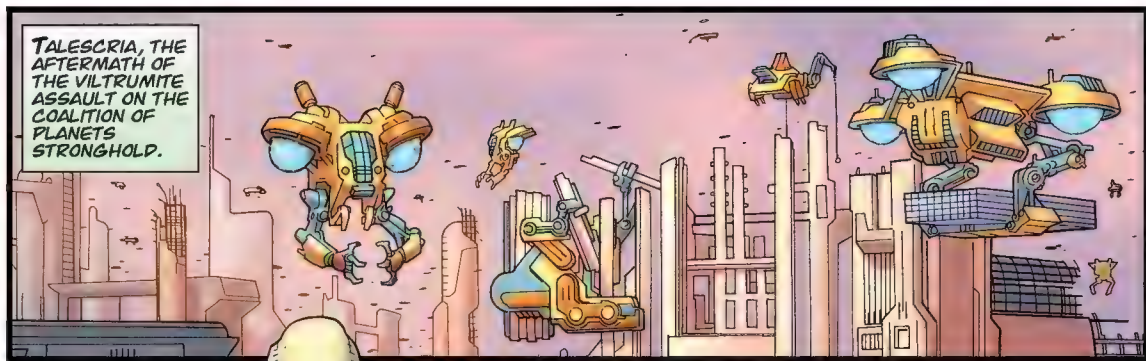


# CHAPTER 75





TALESCRIA, THE AFTERMATH OF THE VILTRUMITE ASSAULT ON THE COALITION OF PLANETS STRONGHOLD.



THE VILTRUMITE WAR IS OVER.

OVER THE LAST TWENTY-FOUR HOURS WE'VE RECEIVED WORD FROM NEARLY EIGHTY-PERCENT OF THE WORLDS COUNTED AS PART OF THE VILTRUM EMPIRE.

THEY'VE BEEN ABANDONED BY THEIR VILTRUMITE OVERLORDS. SEEING THAT WE NOW HAVE VILTRUMITES ON OUR SIDE HAS TURNED THEM TO OUR FAVOR.

THEY SEE THE COALITION AS BEING **STRONGER** THAN THE EMPIRE, AND WITHOUT THEIR BOSSES WATCHING OVER THEM...

...THEY'VE SWITCHED SIDES.



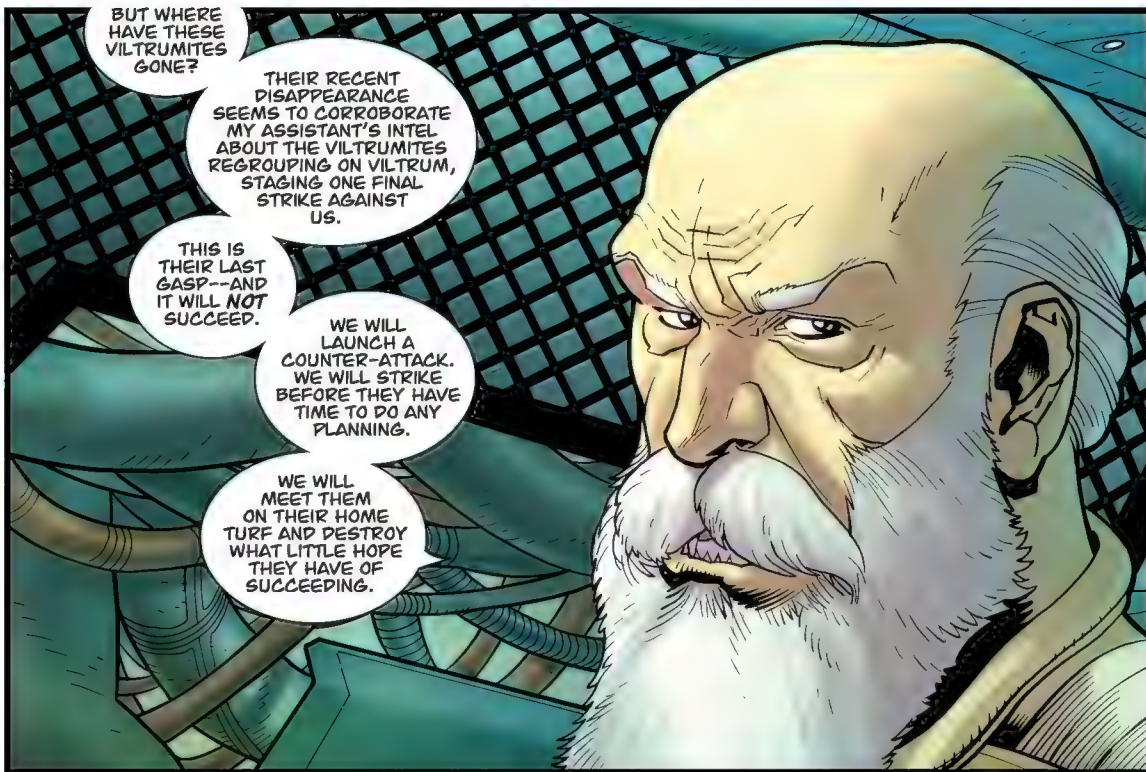
BUT WHERE HAVE THESE VILTRUMITES GONE?

THEIR RECENT DISAPPEARANCE SEEMS TO CORROBORATE MY ASSISTANT'S INTEL ABOUT THE VILTRUMITES REGROUPING ON VILTRUM, STAGING ONE FINAL STRIKE AGAINST US.

THIS IS THEIR LAST GASP--AND IT WILL NOT SUCCEED.

WE WILL LAUNCH A COUNTER-ATTACK. WE WILL STRIKE BEFORE THEY HAVE TIME TO DO ANY PLANNING.

WE WILL MEET THEM ON THEIR HOME TURF AND DESTROY WHAT LITTLE HOPE THEY HAVE OF SUCCEEDING.



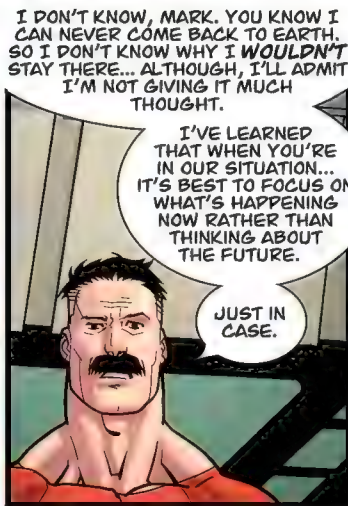
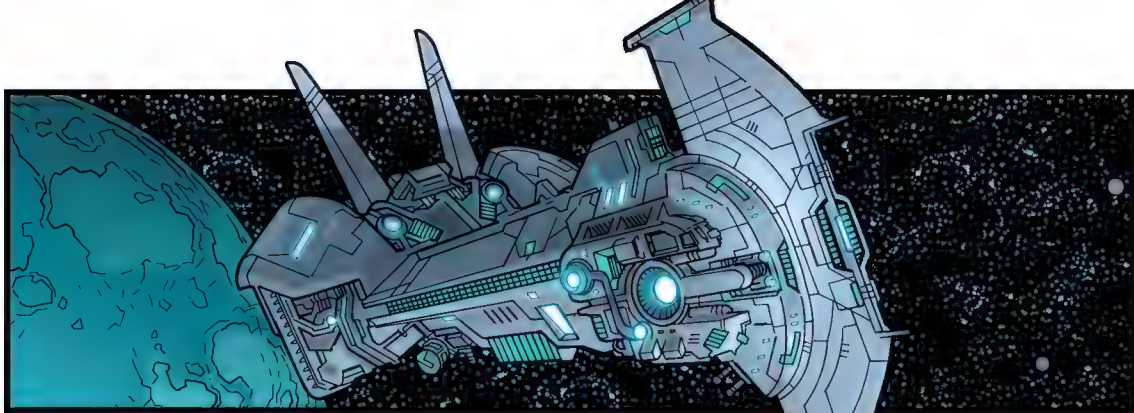


ARE YOU  
READY  
TO FINISH  
THIS?

HELL  
YEAH!



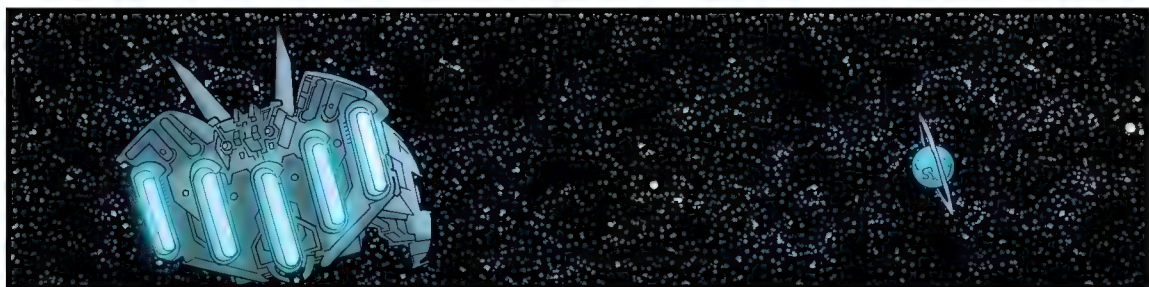




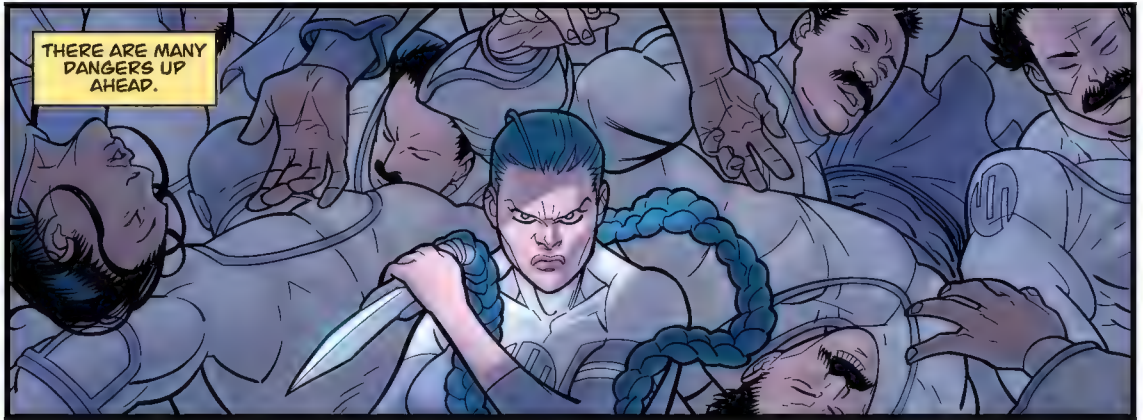
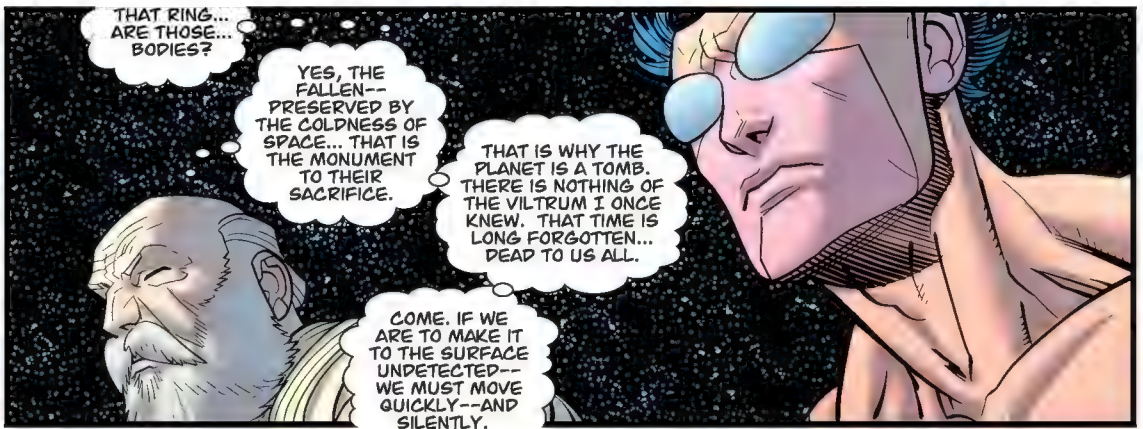




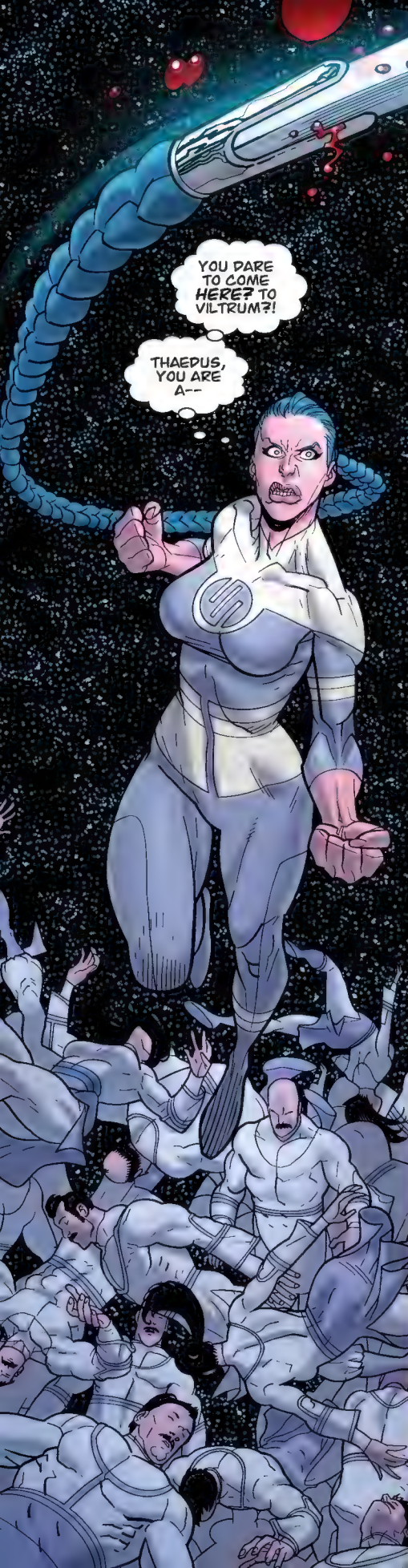






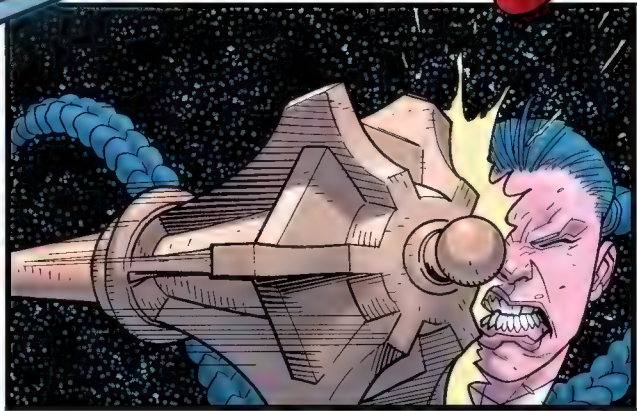






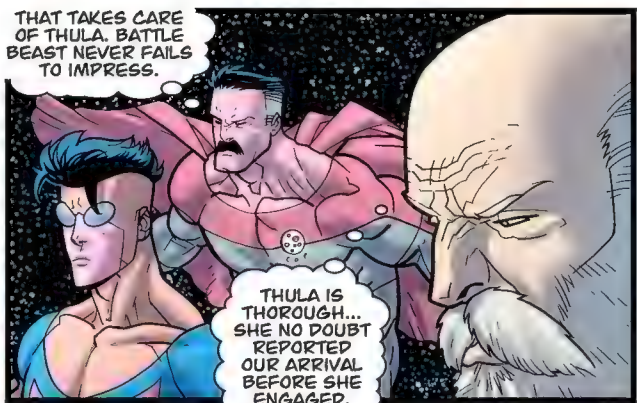
YOU DARE  
TO COME  
HERE? TO  
VILTRUM?!

THAEDUS,  
YOU ARE  
A--



TOO MUCH  
THINKING!  
MORE  
FIGHTING!

MORE!



THAT TAKES CARE  
OF THULA. BATTLE  
BEAST NEVER FAILS  
TO IMPRESS.

THULA IS  
THOROUGH...  
SHE NO DOUBT  
REPORTED  
OUR ARRIVAL  
BEFORE SHE  
ENGAGED.



LOOKS  
LIKE IT!

OKAY...  
THIS IS IT,  
EVERYONE.

GET  
READY.





TO ALL  
WHO MAKE  
THEMSELVES  
ENEMIES OF  
THE VILTRUM  
EMPIRE--!

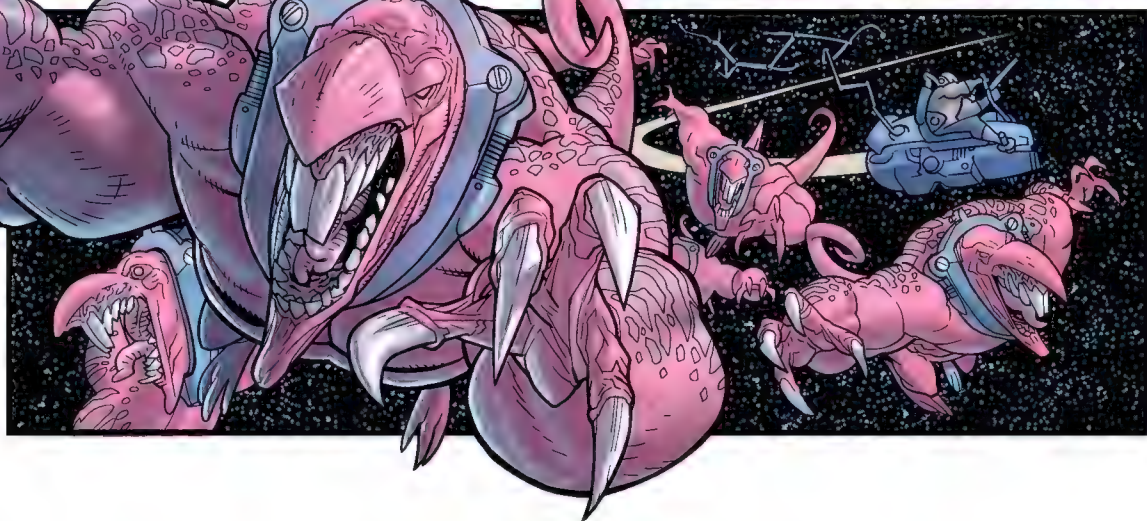
PREPARE  
FOR YOUR  
DEATHS!

WE ARE GROSSLY  
OUT-NUMBERED...  
MOVE FAST FROM  
OPPONENT TO OPPONENT.  
TRY NOT TO LET THEM  
OVERPOWER YOU--WE'RE  
GOING TO NEED TO MOVE  
QUICKLY IF WE'RE TO  
SURVIVE THIS.

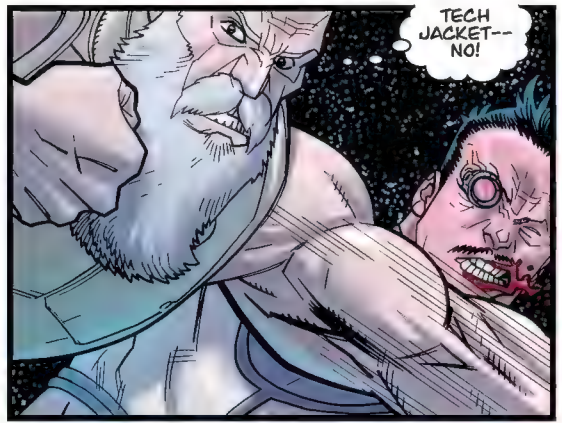
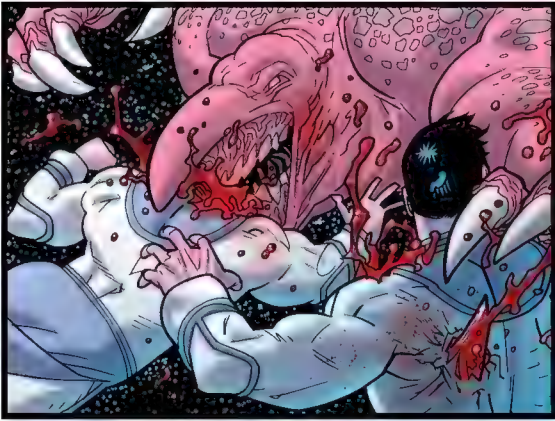


IF ONLY  
SPACE  
RACER  
COULD--

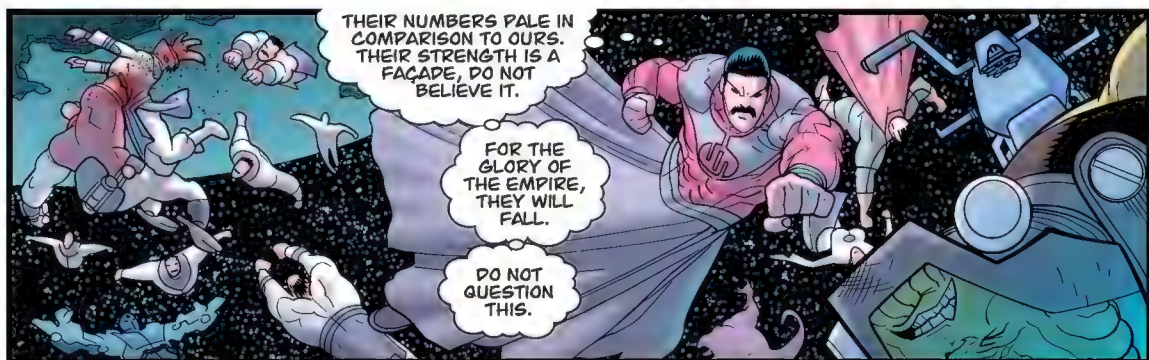
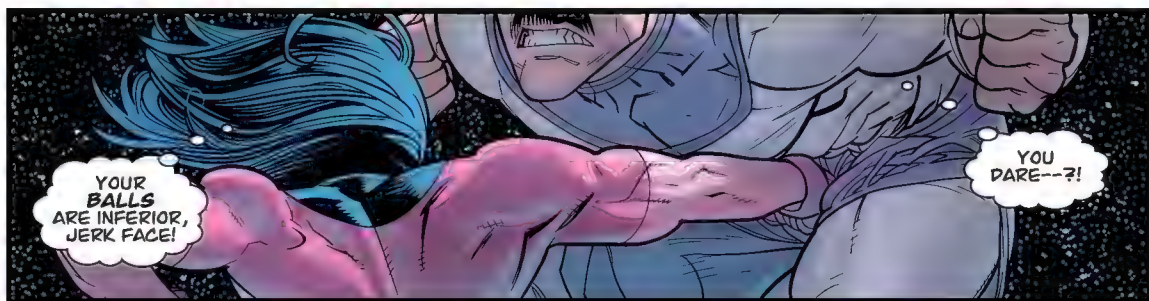
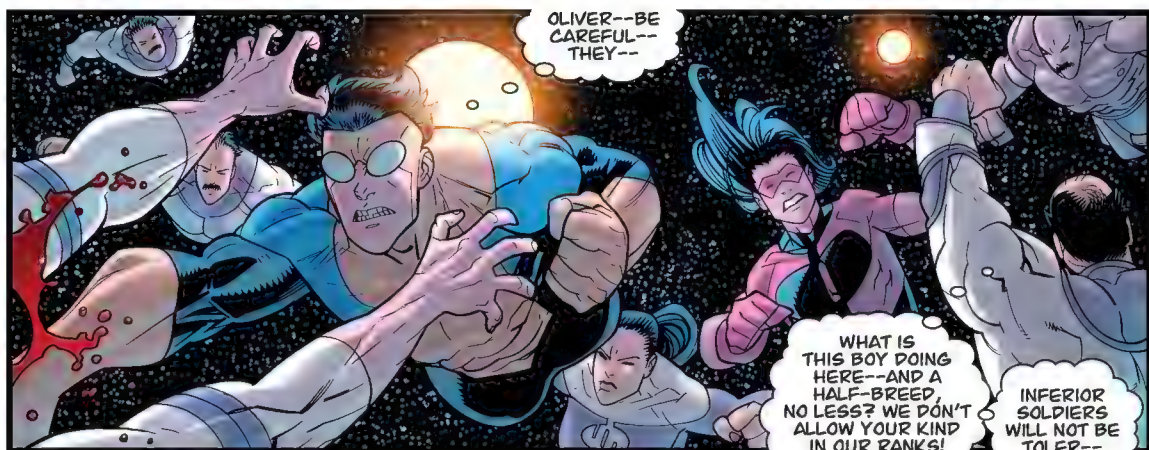








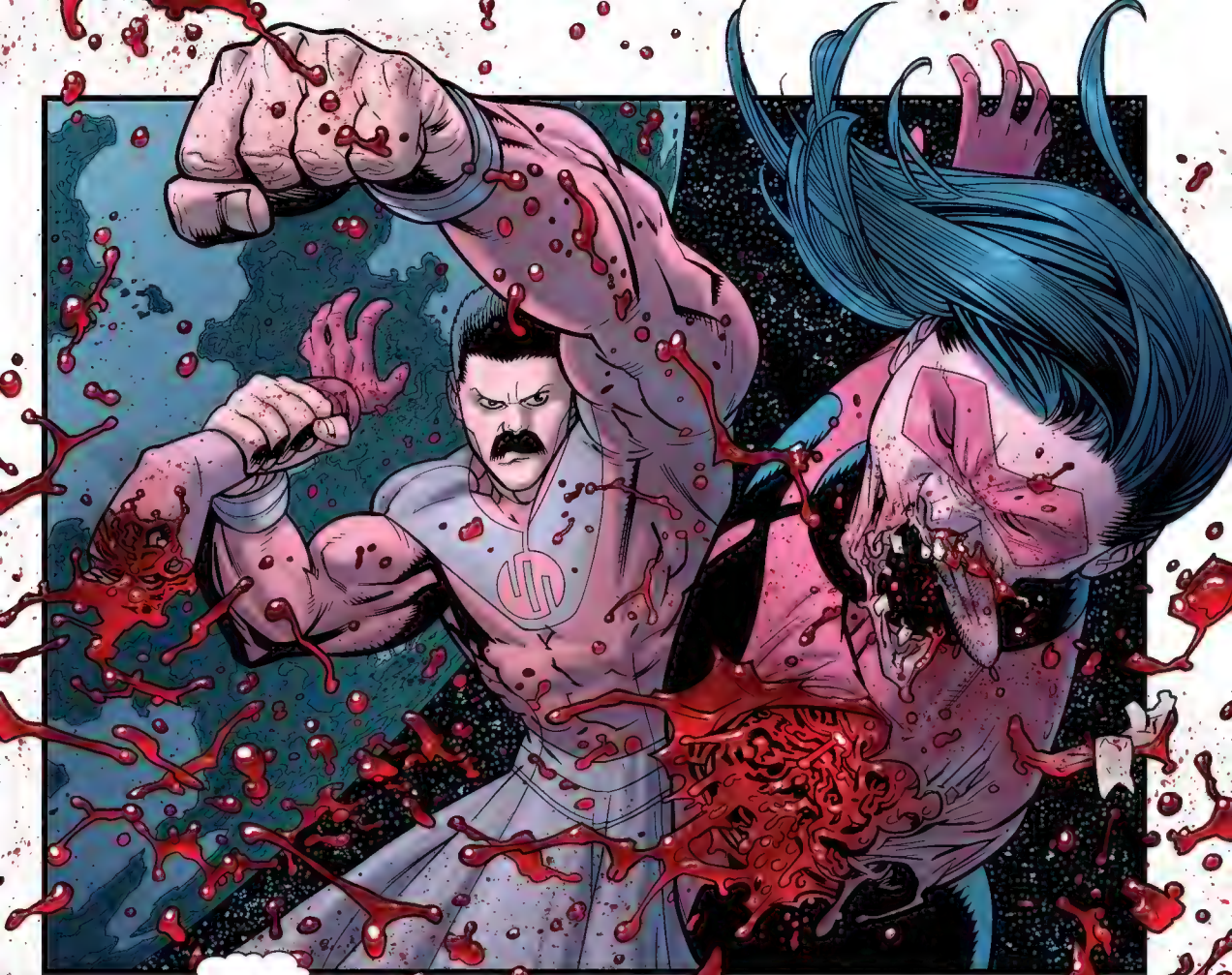












OLIVER!



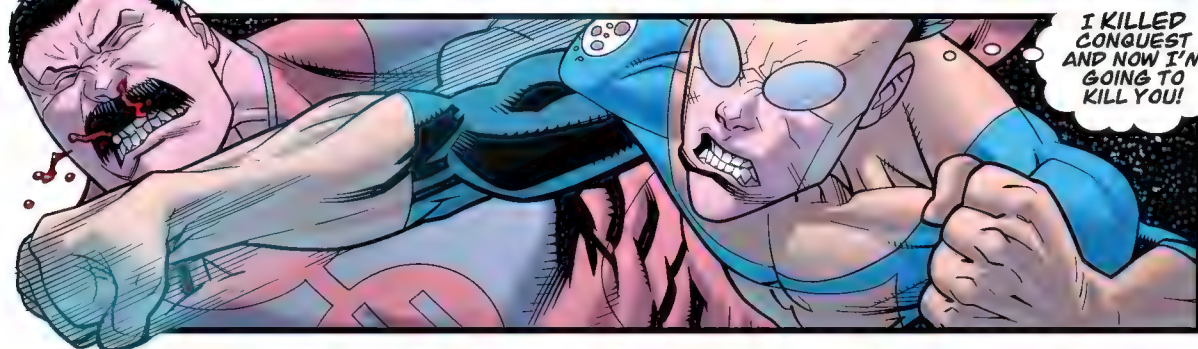
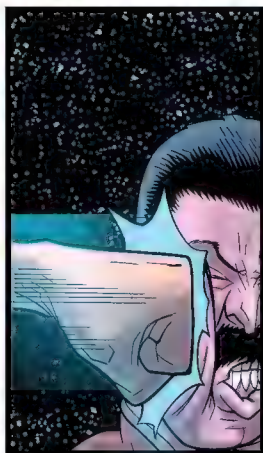
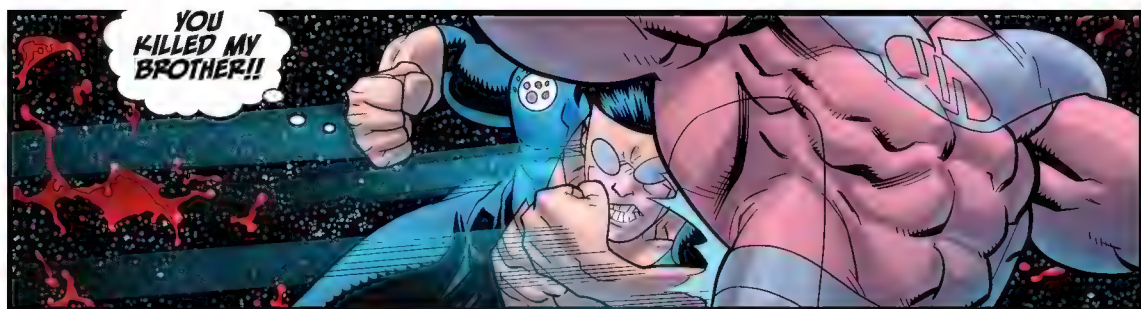
GET  
BACK  
HERE!

SEEMED  
LIKE SUCH  
A NICE  
BOY...

MY  
BROTHER...









WHAT HE SAYS  
IS TRUE--MY  
SON KILLED  
CONQUEST!

STILL SO  
CONFIDENT  
IN YOUR  
VICTORY?

NOW,  
WHILE THEY'RE  
DISTRACTED--  
WE HAVE TO MAKE A  
MOVE--SOMETHING  
THEY WON'T  
EXPECT.

SPACE  
RACER--  
TO ME!

YES!

YES!!

WHAT'S  
GOING  
ON OVER  
THERE?

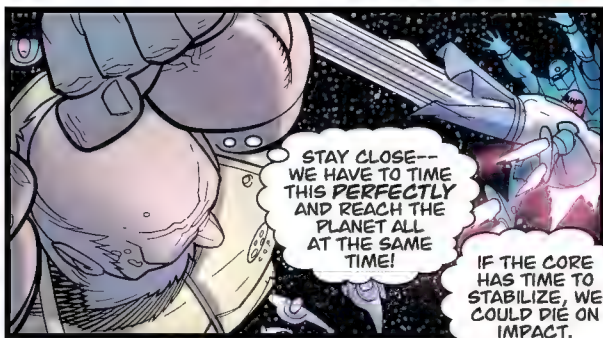
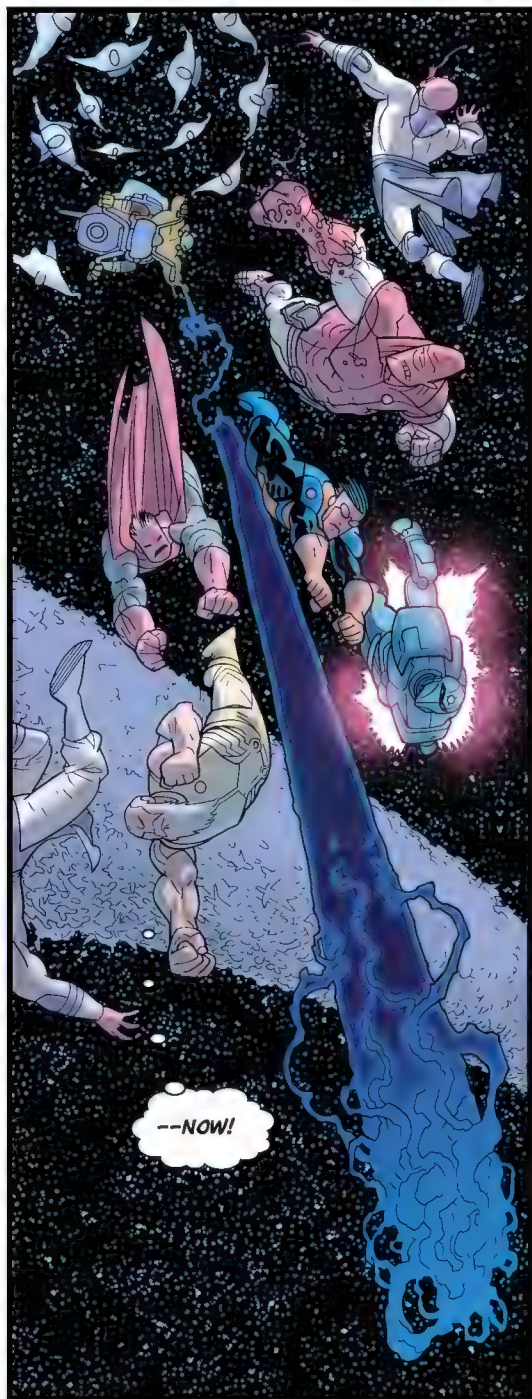
BEATS  
ME.

ALL OF  
YOU--  
WITH ME--  
NOW!

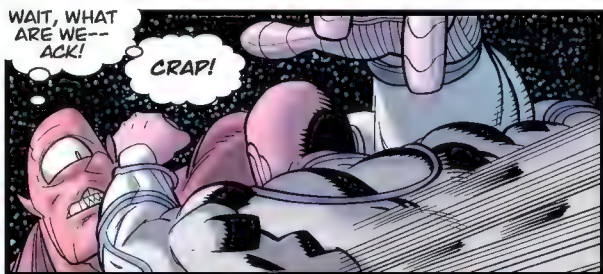
WE'LL  
ONLY GET  
ONE SHOT  
AT THIS!

SPACE  
RACER--  
DEAD CENTER,  
FIRE YOUR  
GUN--

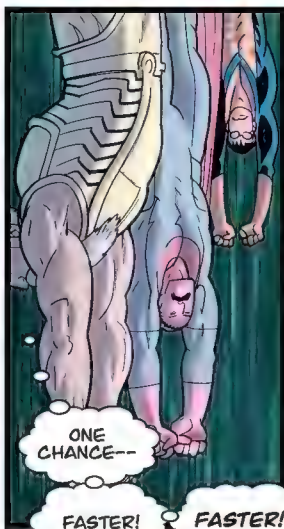




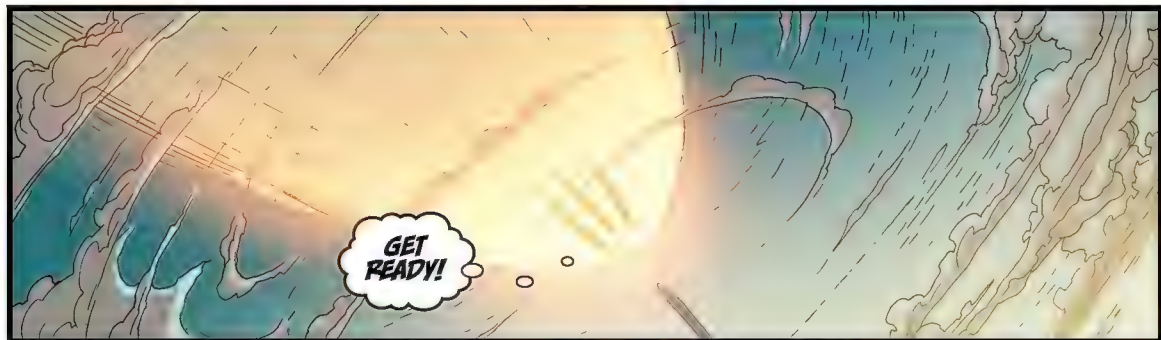
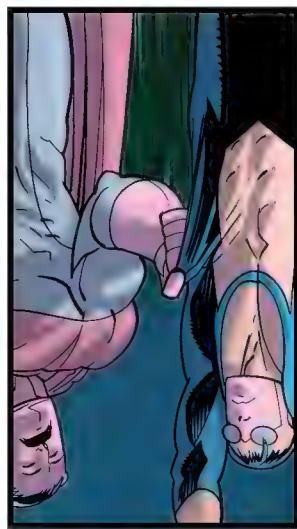
IF THE CORE HAS TIME TO STABILIZE, WE COULD DIE ON IMPACT.



CRAP!



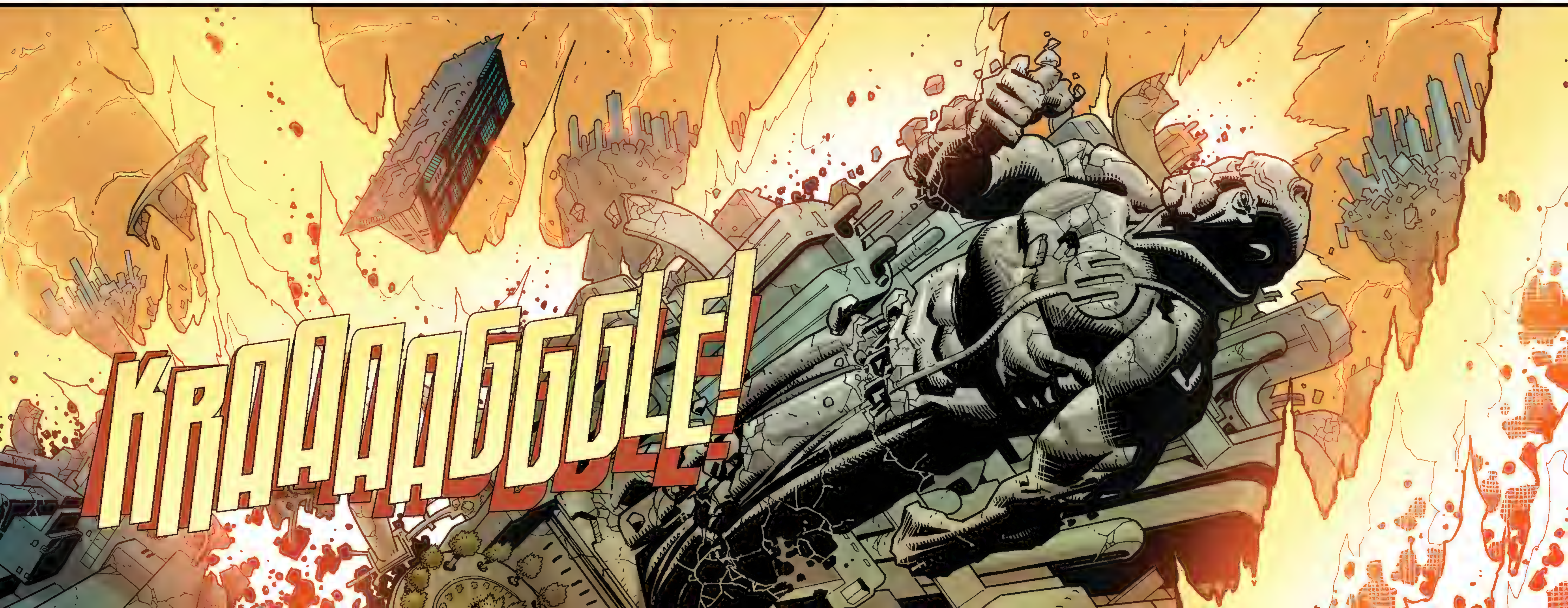
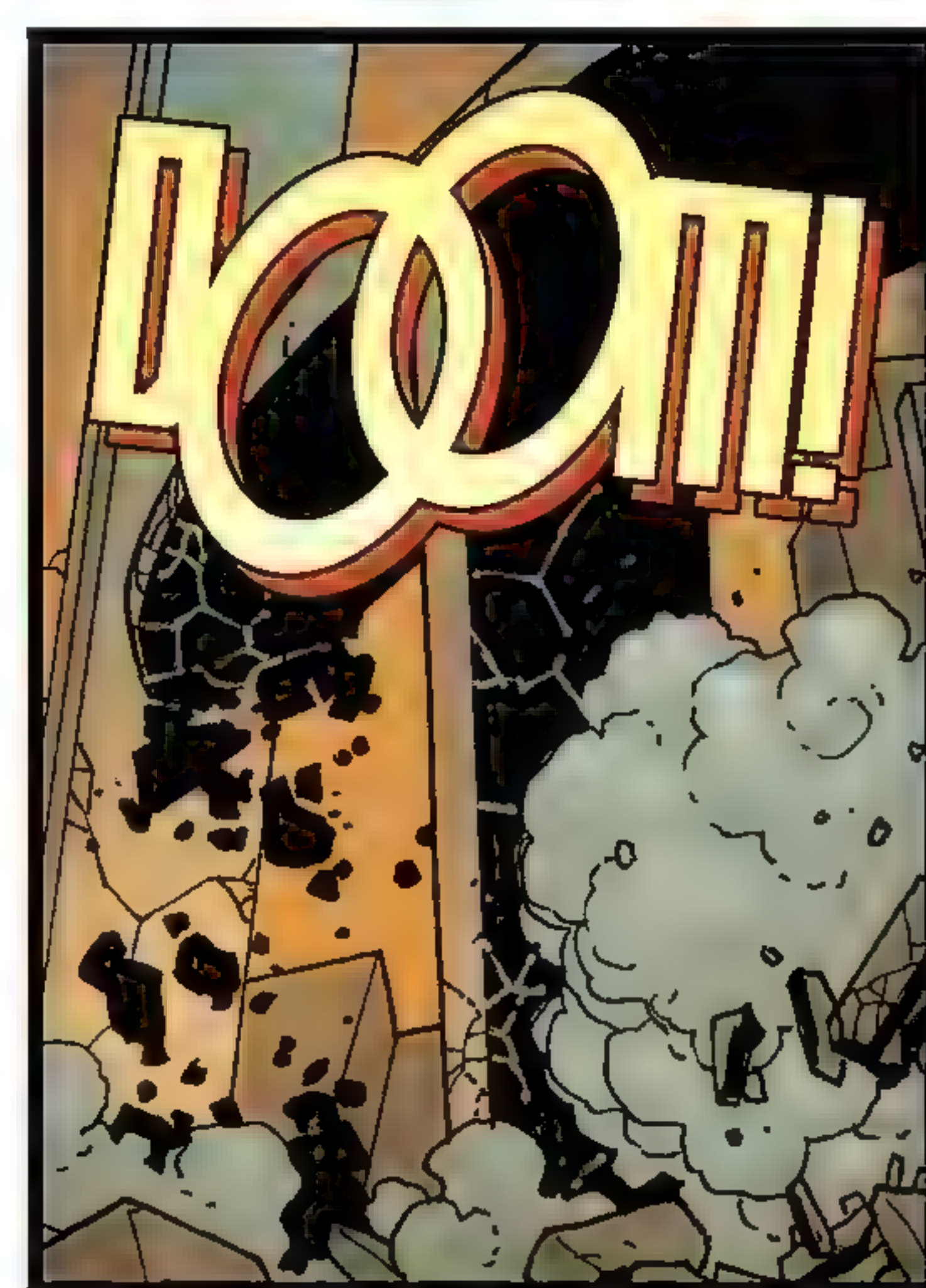
FASTER! ♀ FASTER!



































YOU BROUGHT  
THIS UPON US ALL--  
IT IS YOU WHO SET  
THIS IN MOTION--  
CARRIED IT OUT--  
THAEDUS OF VILTRUM...  
BETRAYER.

YOU HAVE  
TAKEN IT ALL FROM  
US. OUR HERITAGE,  
OUR HOME...  
OUR HISTORY...  
DESTROYED.

THE VILTRUM  
EMPIRE WILL  
NOT STAND FOR  
THIS!



YOU WILL DO WHAT  
YOU WILL AND I AM  
PREPARED FOR YOUR  
WRATH. BUT KNOW  
THIS, THRAGG,  
WHATEVER HAPPENS  
HERE...

...YOU  
HAVE NO  
EMPIRE.

SURRENDER  
YOUR--



SURRENDER?!

YOU  
SICKEN  
ME.

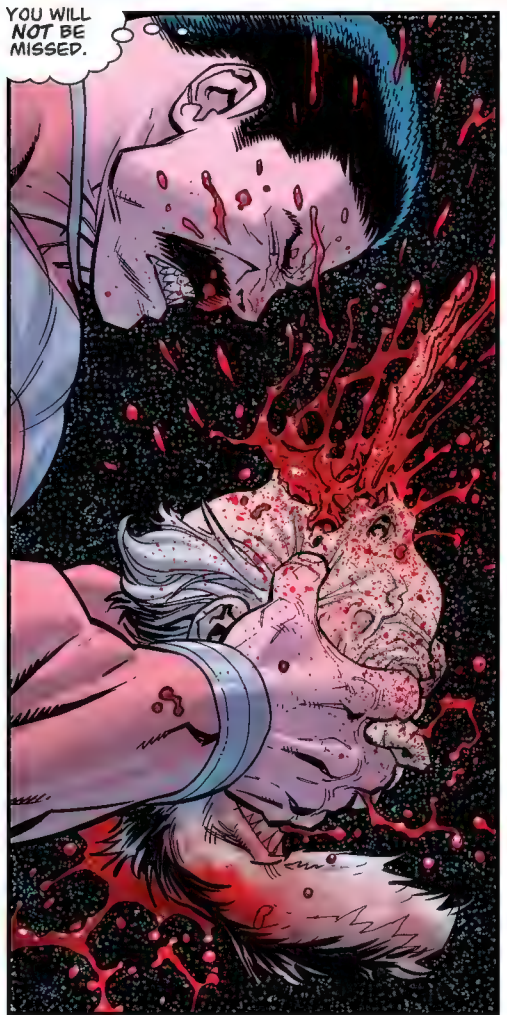
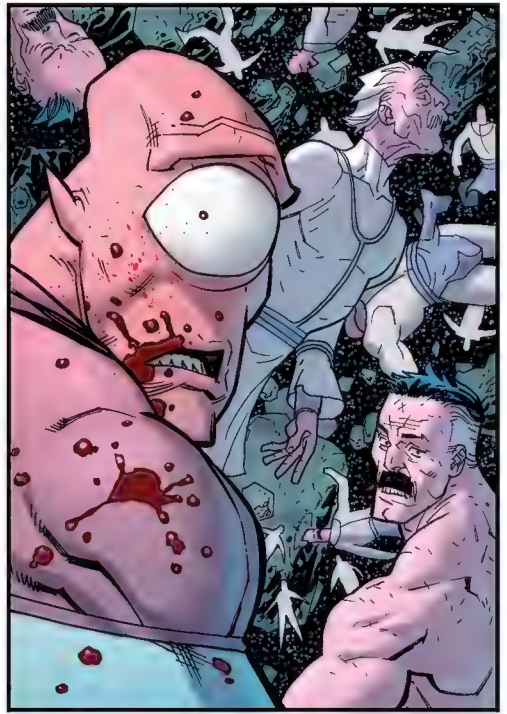
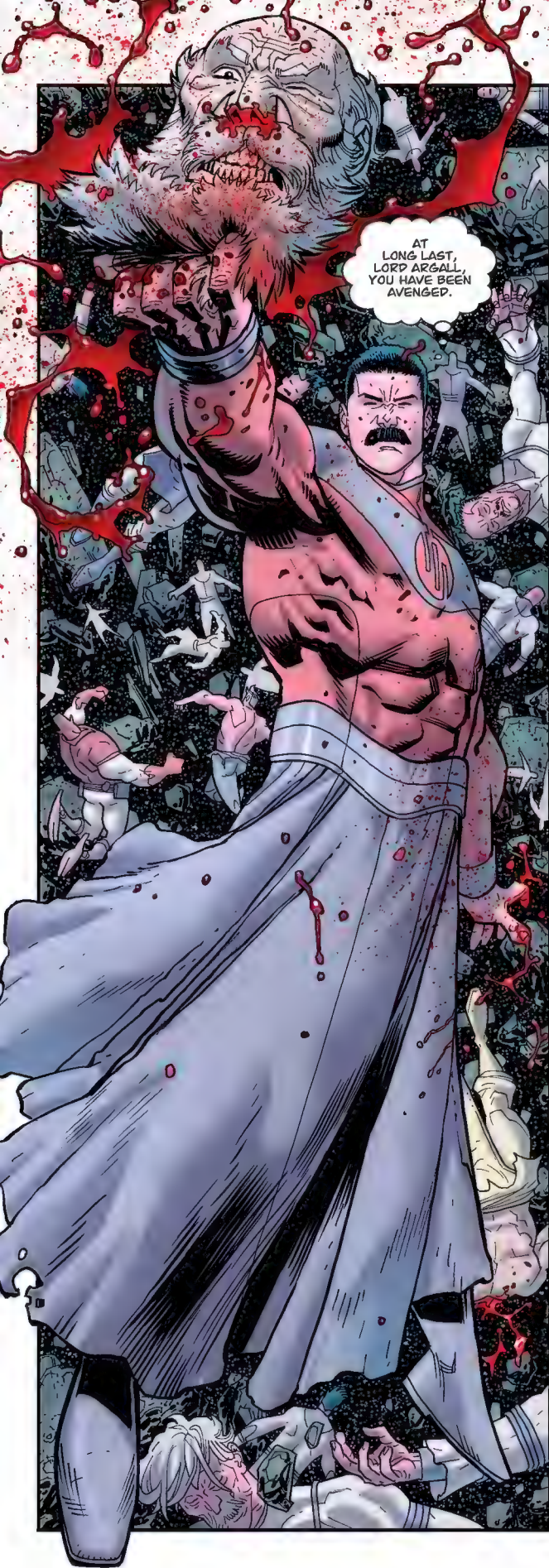
THERE  
IS NOTHING  
LEFT...



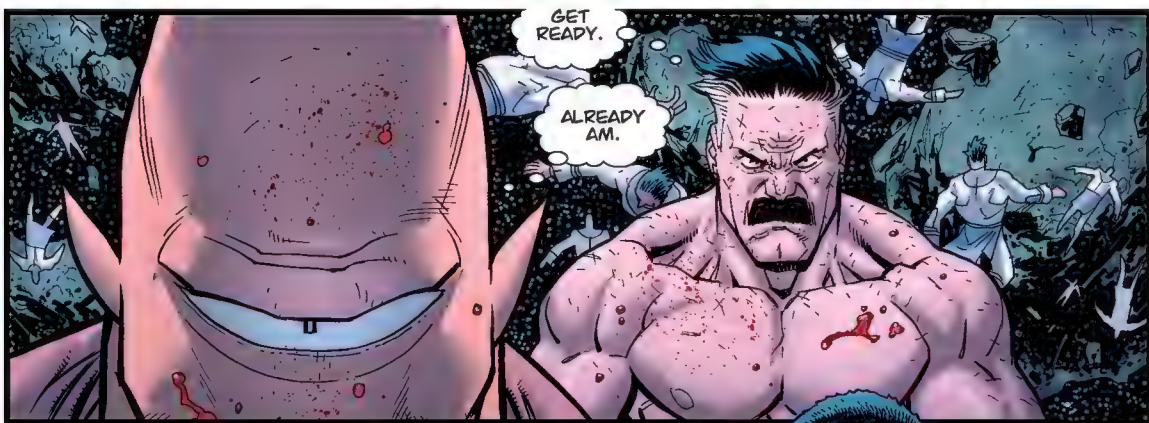
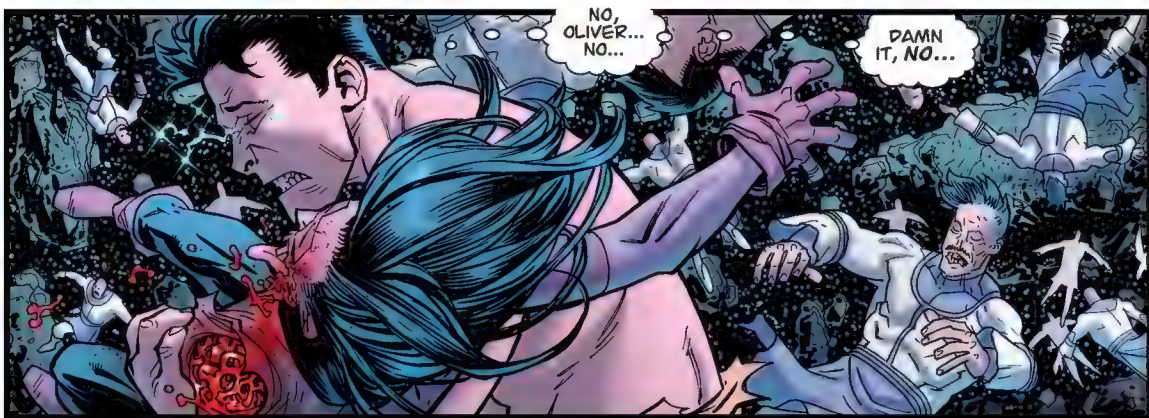
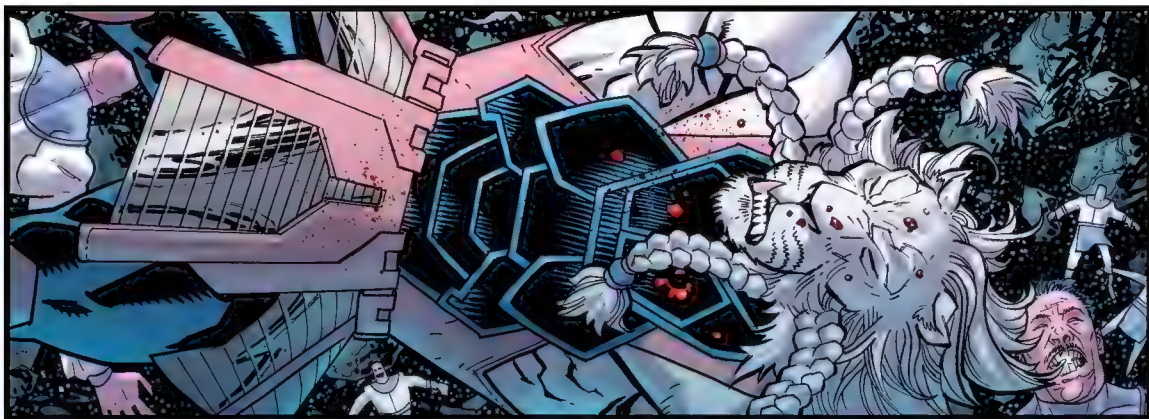


...BUT  
REVENGE!













YOU  
ARE ALL  
NEXT.





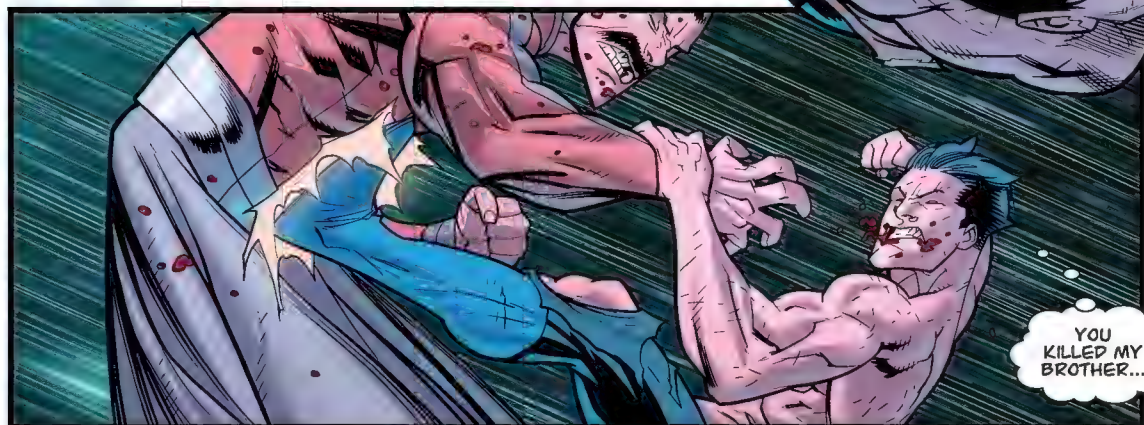
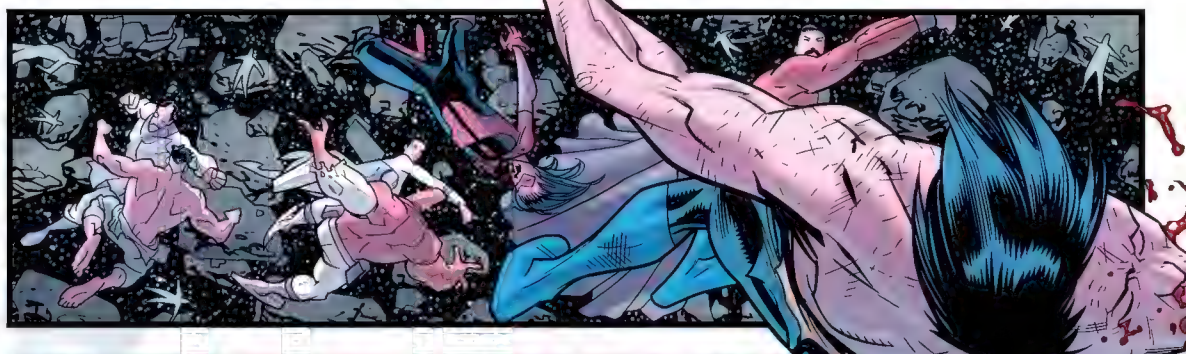


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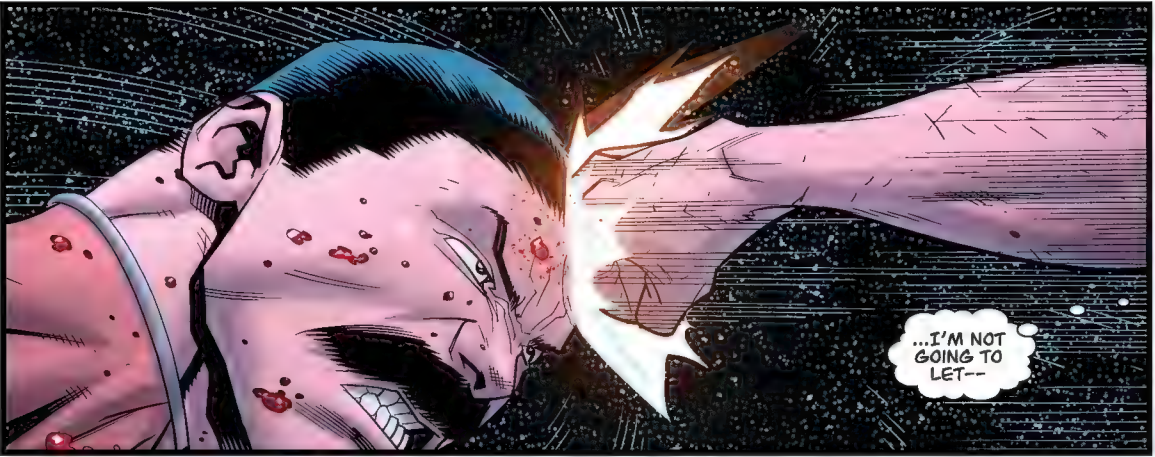


PYAN

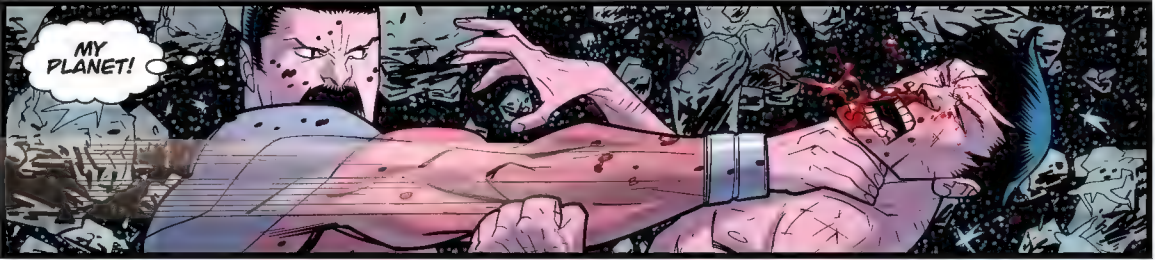








...I'M NOT  
GOING TO  
LET--



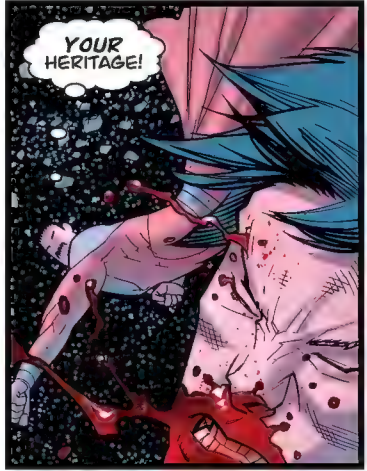
MY  
PLANET!



MY  
HISTORY!



MY  
HERITAGE!



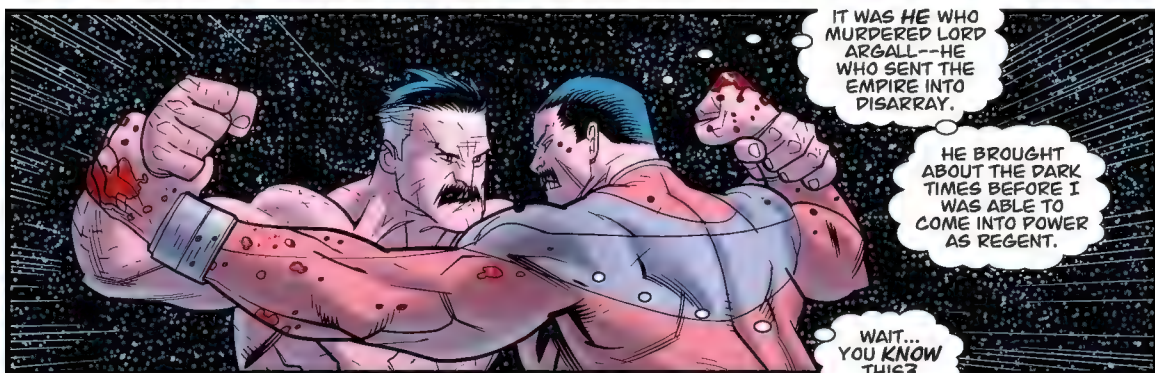
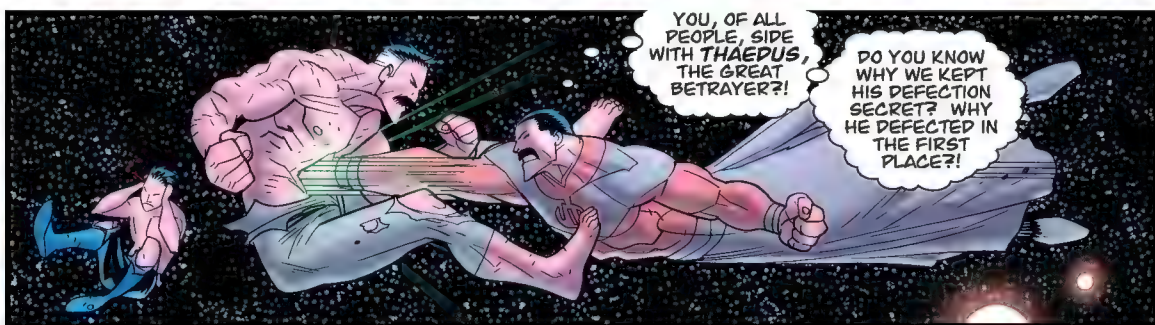
YOUR  
HERITAGE!



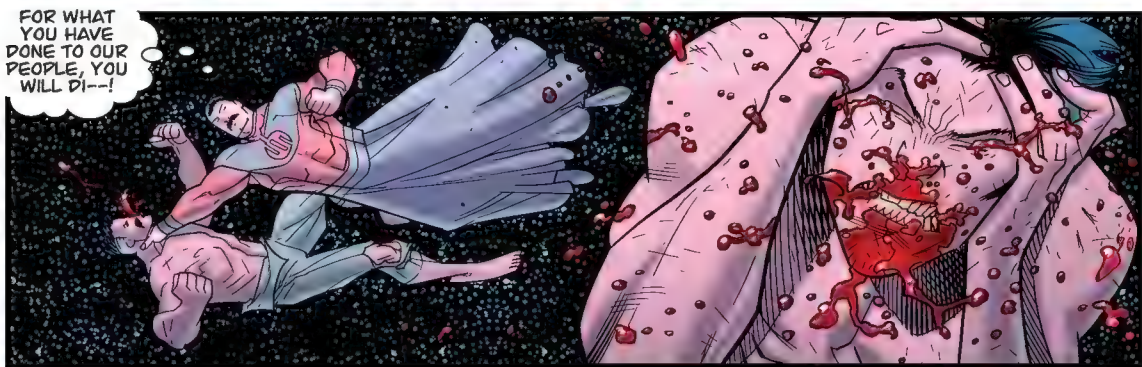
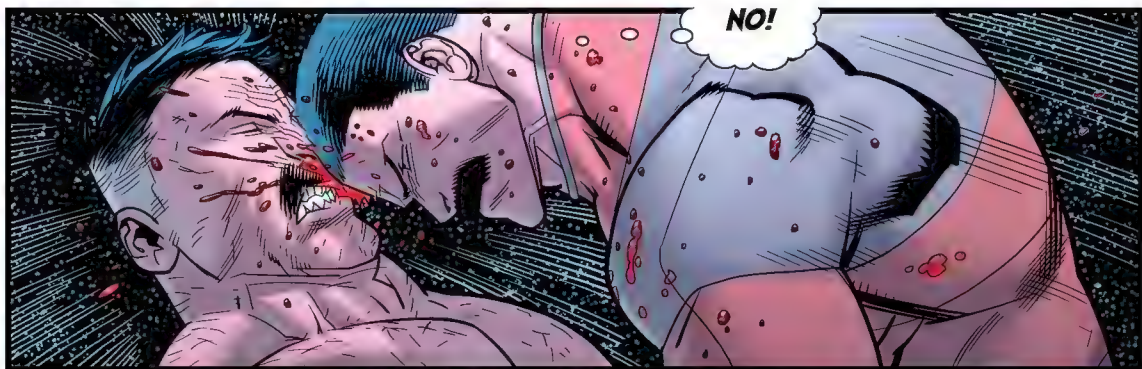
WE PLANNED TO  
RETURN TO VILTRUM,  
TRIUMPHANT,  
OUR RANKS  
REFRESHED...  
ONE DAY...

I HAVE TAKEN  
NOTHING FROM  
YOU THAT COMPARES.  
YOU HAVE ROBBED  
US OF OUR VERY  
FUTURE. YOUR  
DEATH WON'T  
BEGIN TO--

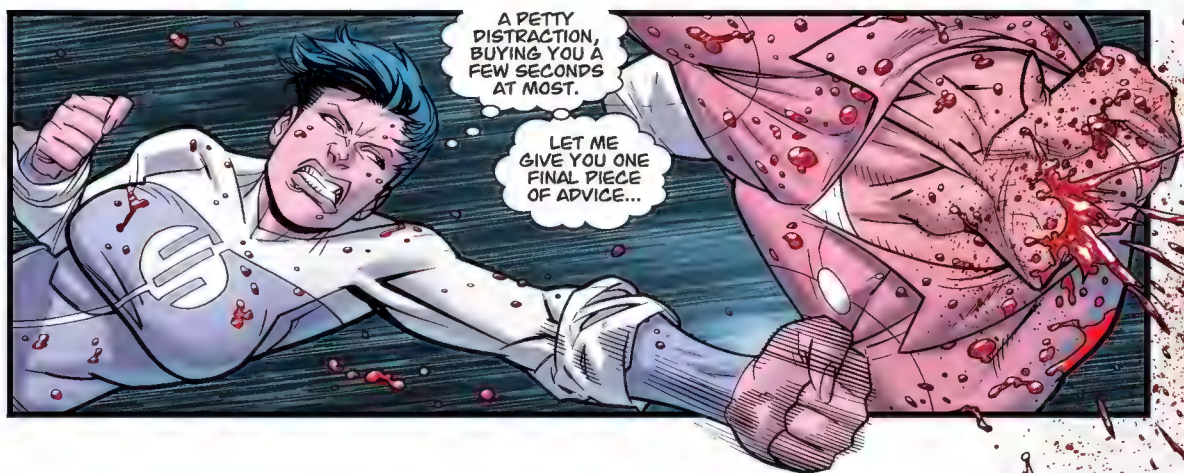
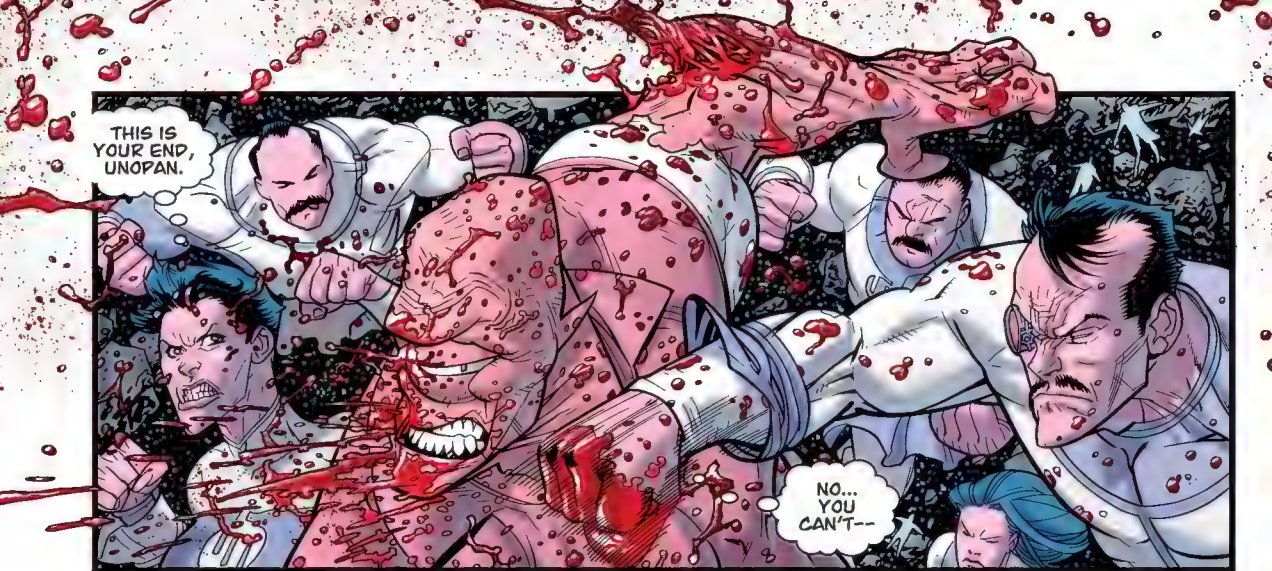














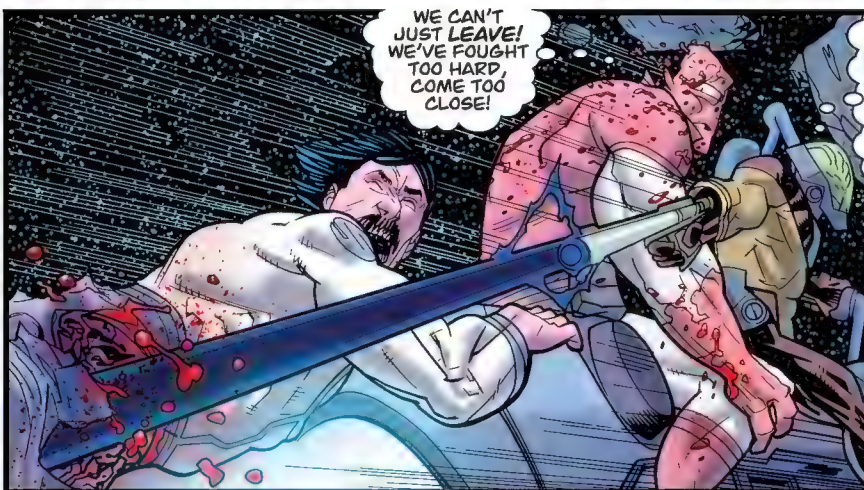


WHAT?!



WE  
ARE OUT  
OF HERE,  
FRIEND!

SPACE  
RACER,  
WHAT ARE  
YOU--?

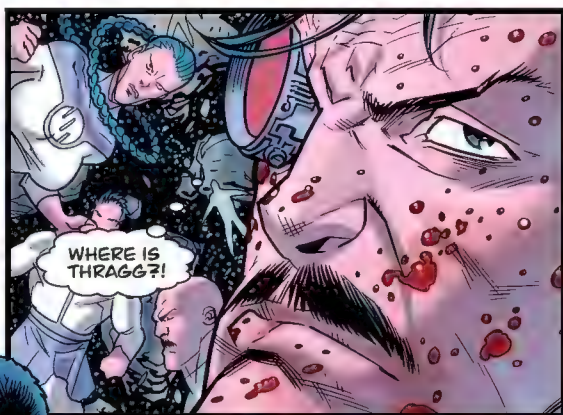
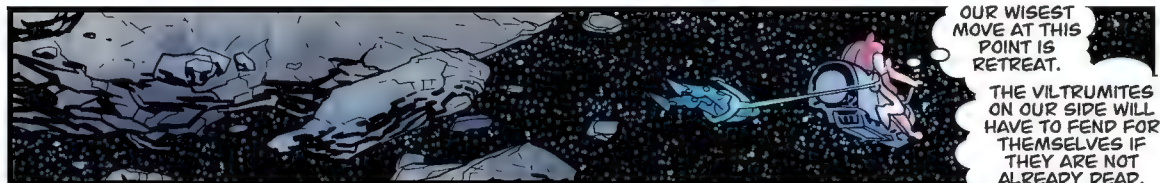
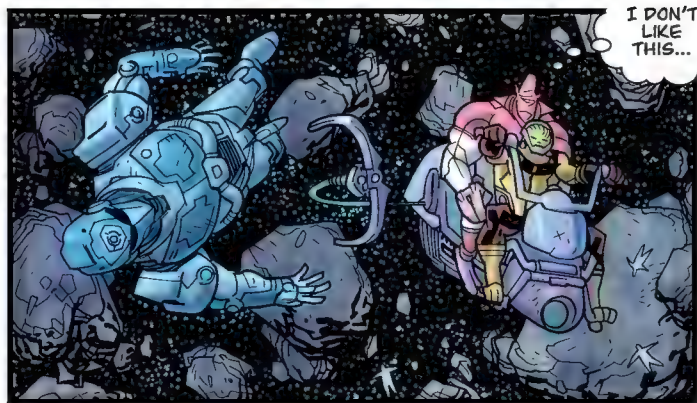


WE CAN'T  
JUST LEAVE!  
WE'VE FOUGHT  
TOO HARD,  
COME TOO  
CLOSE!

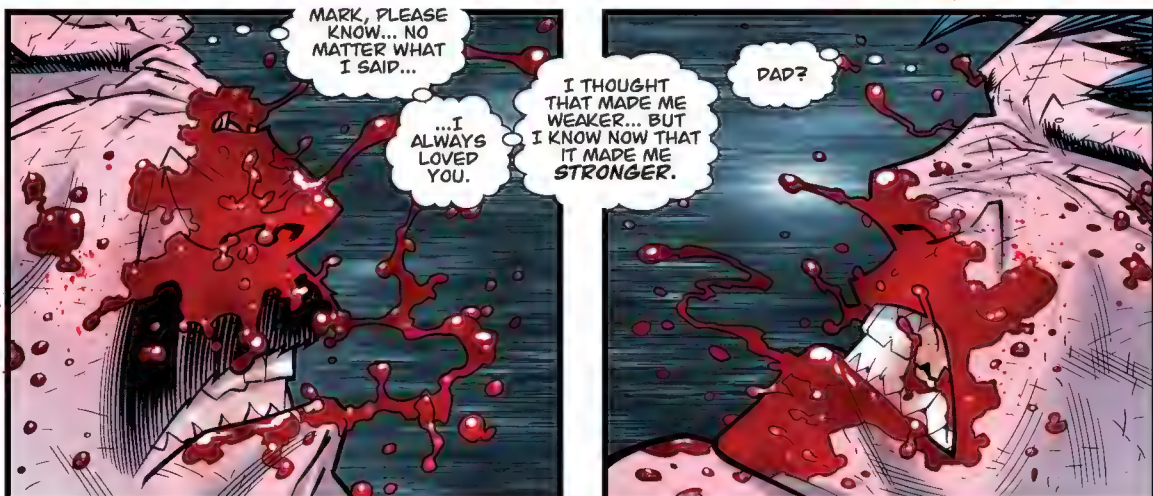
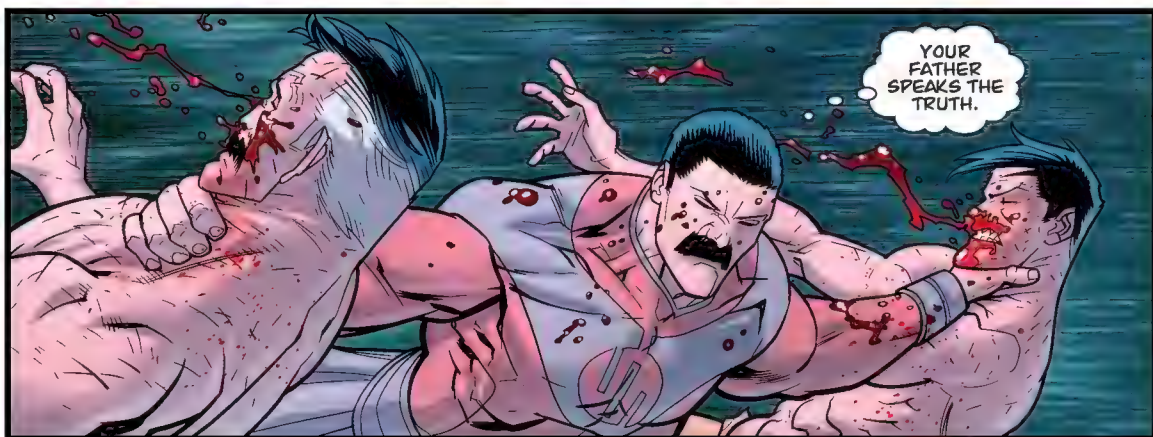
HAVE YOU BEEN PAYING  
ATTENTION? THE  
DESTRUCTION OF VILTRUM  
WAS LUCK AND IT KNOCKED  
THEM OFF BALANCE--BUT  
LOOK AT YOU. WE'RE OUT-  
NUMBERED. THIS WAS NEVER  
MEANT TO BE A FULL-ON  
ASSAULT. WE WERE MEANT  
TO POSITION OURSELVES ON  
VILTRUM AND WAIT FOR  
MY ARRIVAL WITH THE  
RAGNAR... THIS HAS  
BEEN A DISASTER.

WE LEAVE  
NOW OR  
WE'RE ALL  
DEAD!

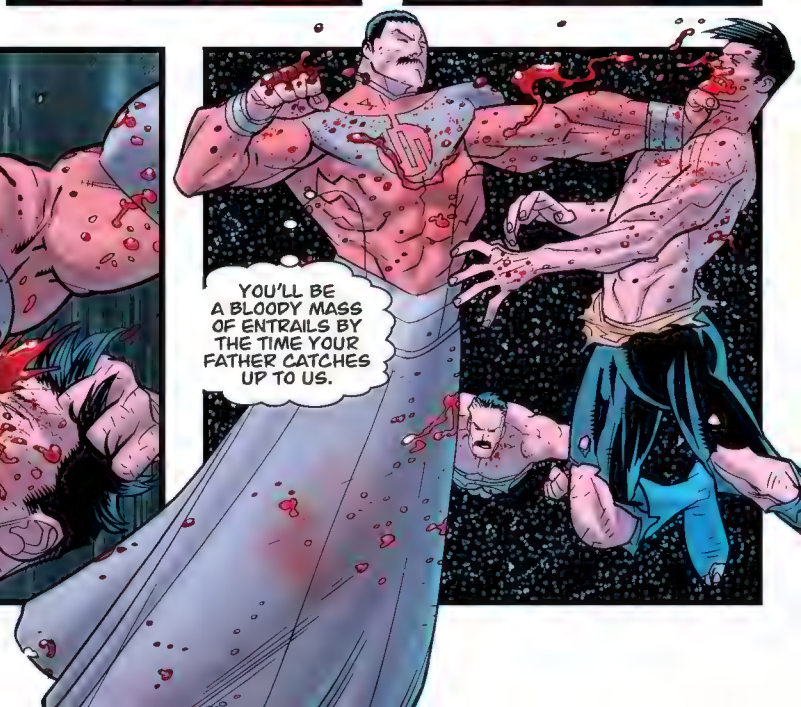
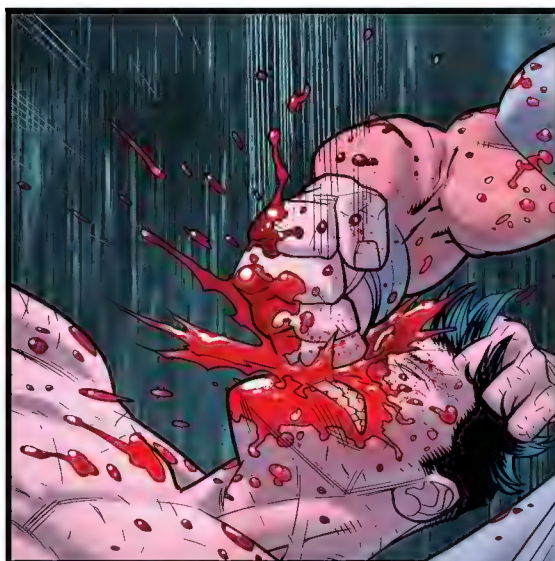
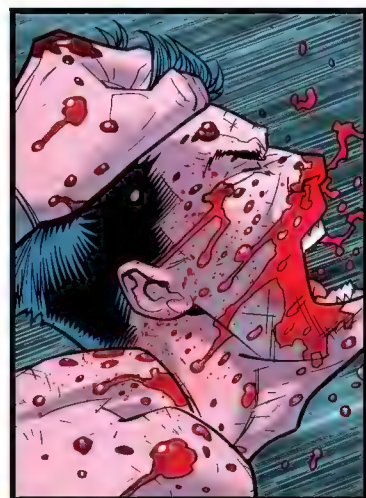
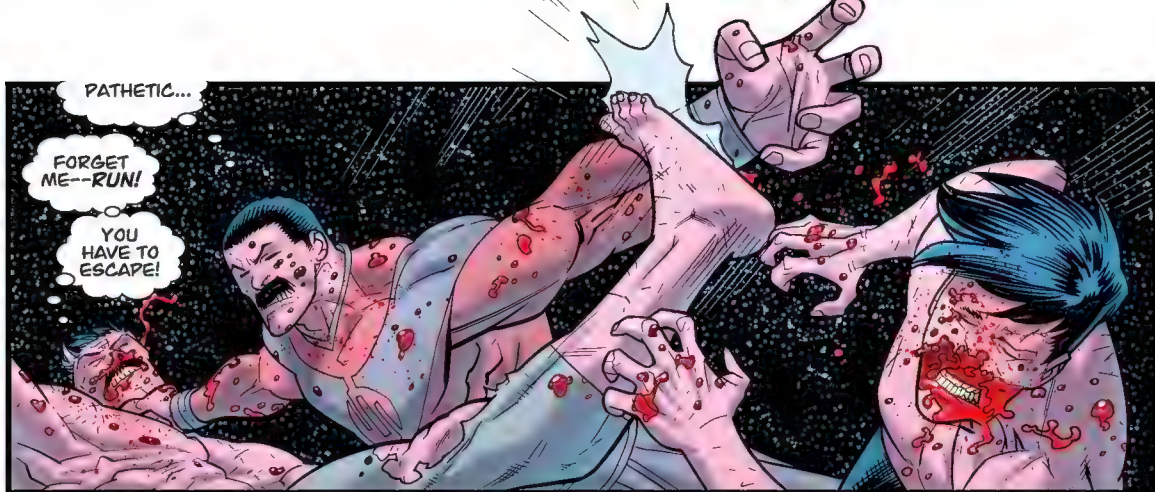




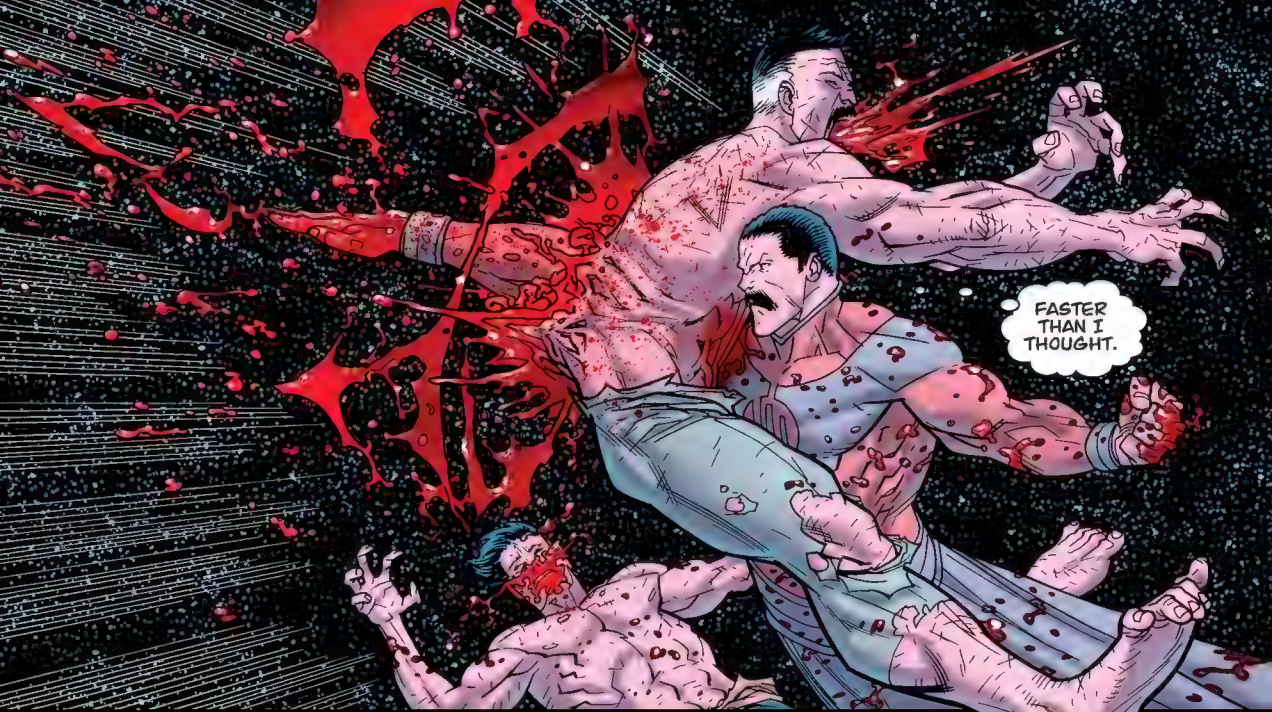












FASTER  
THAN I  
THOUGHT.

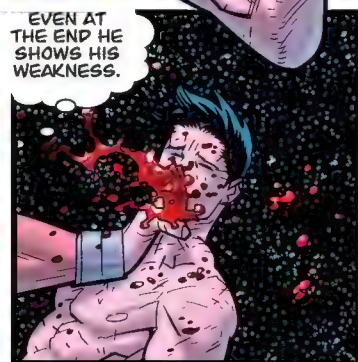


MARK...

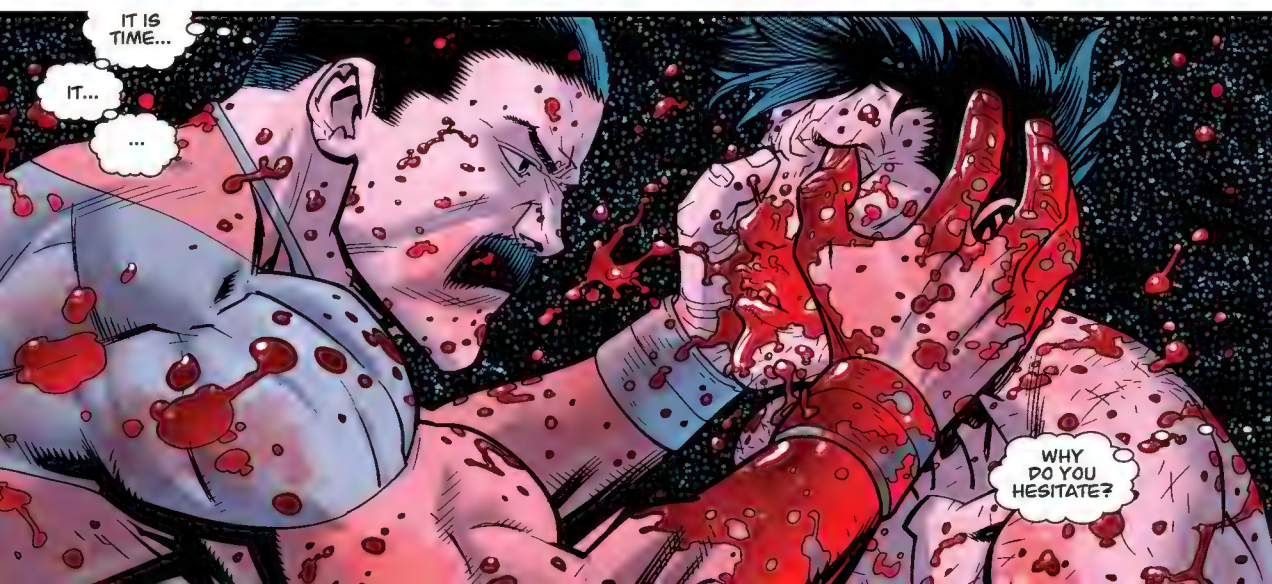
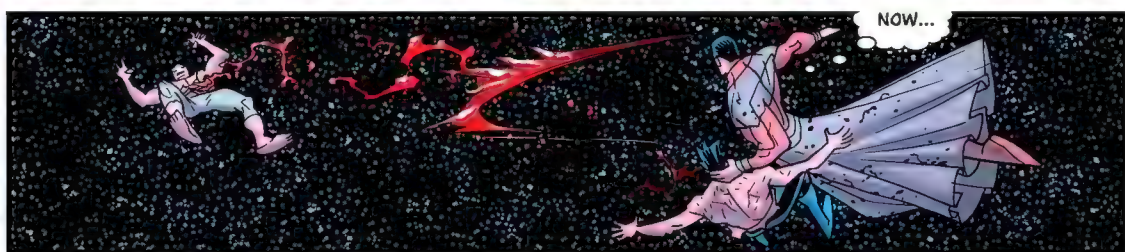
...



EVEN AT  
THE END HE  
SHOWS HIS  
WEAKNESS.



NOW...



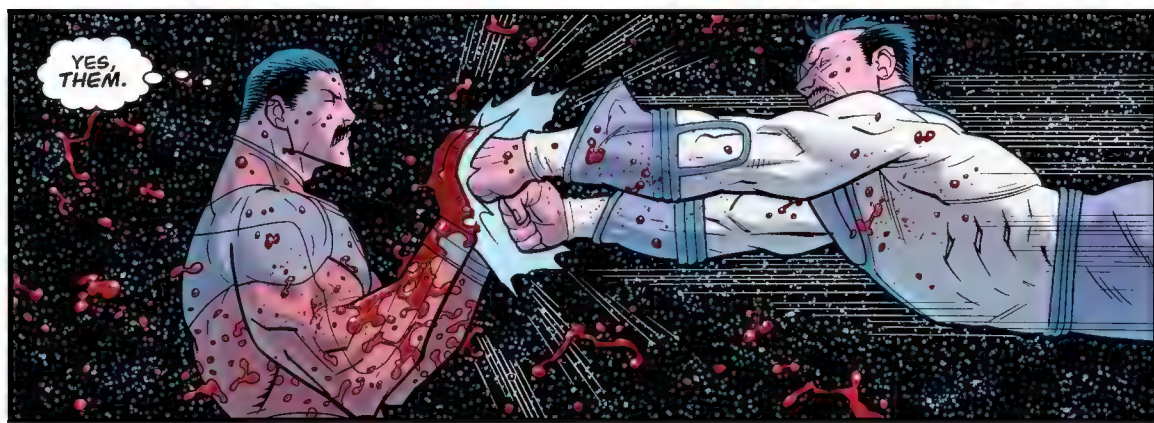
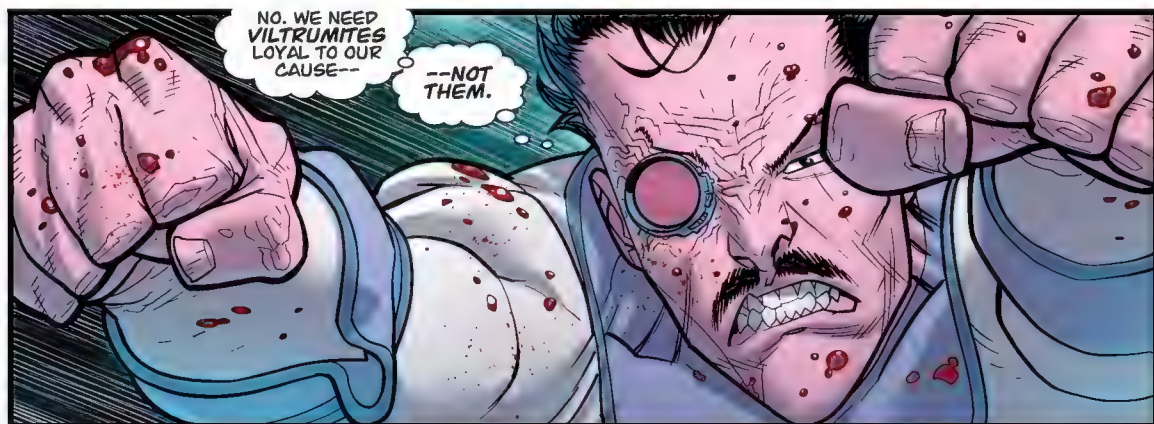
IT IS  
TIME...

IT...

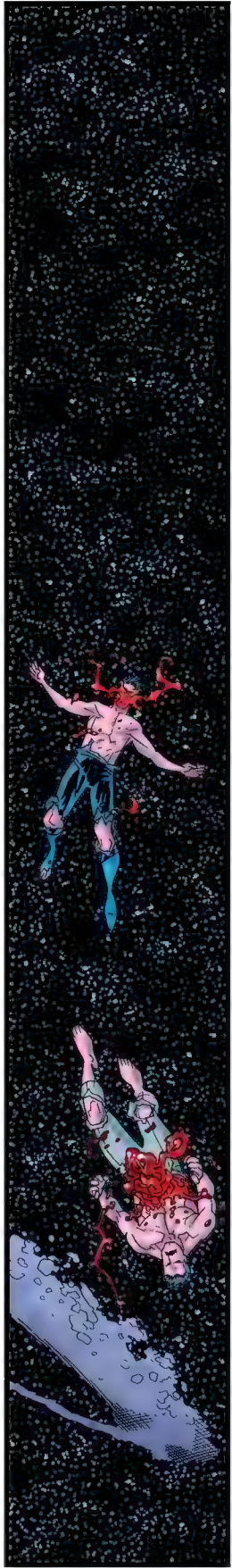
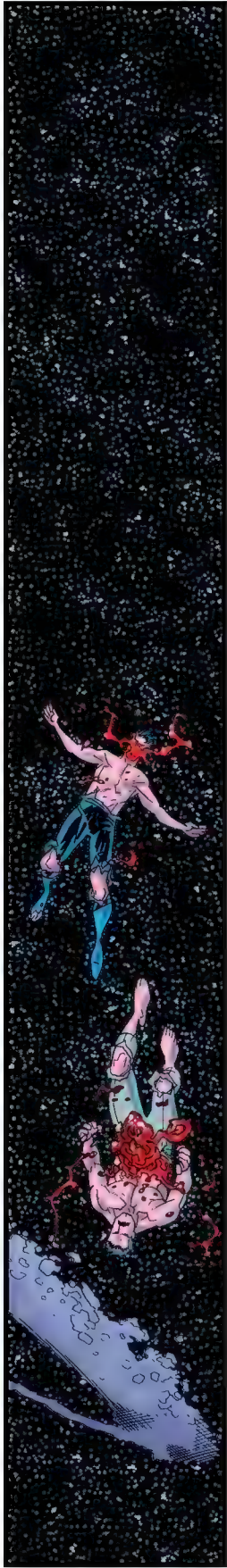
...

WHY  
DO YOU  
HESITATE?

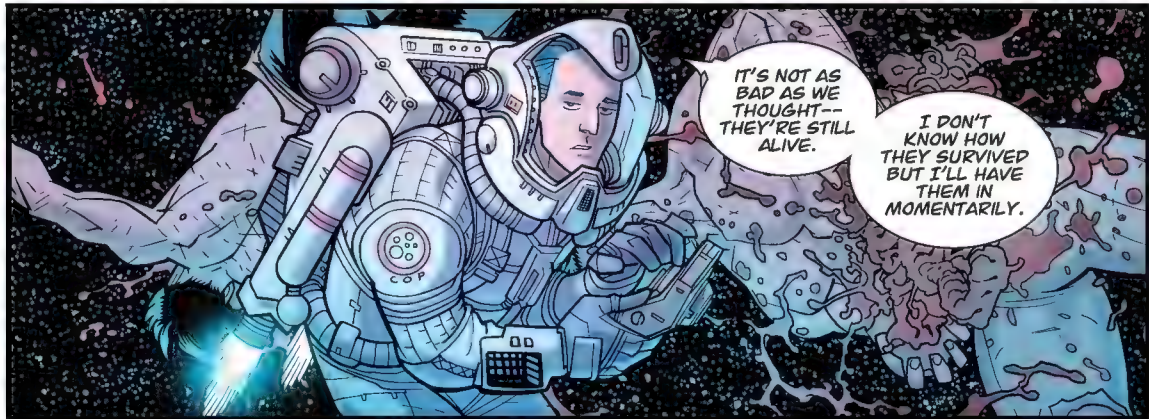
















WHA--

--HUH?

THEY TOLD  
ME YOU WERE  
WAKING UP.  
I'M GLAD I  
MADE IT HERE  
IN TIME.

IT'S SO  
GOOD TO SEE  
YOU, MARK. I  
WAS WORRIED  
THERE AT THE  
BEGINNING.



WHAT ARE YOU  
WEARING?

THIS? MY  
ARM WAS  
BROKEN IN THE  
BATTLE OF  
VILTRUM. I'M  
STILL WEARING  
A CAST.

THAT'S NOT  
WHAT I MEANT...  
AND HOW LONG  
HAVE I BEEN  
OUT?

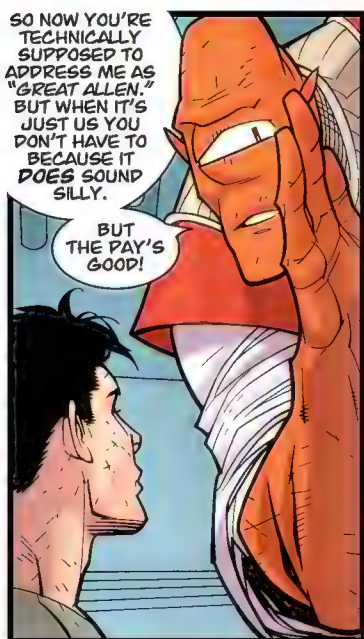




TWO WEEKS, YOU WERE PRETTY MESSED UP. AS FOR THE CLOTHES... I'VE BEEN BUMPED UP TO THE TOP POSITION. I'M THE BOSS.

WITH THAEDUS GONE, THE COALITION OF PLANETS WAS IN DISARRAY, AND THEY FEARED THIS WAR WAS FAR FROM OVER.

I WAS HASTILY CHRISTENED TOP DOG OF THE COALITION.



SO NOW YOU'RE TECHNICALLY SUPPOSED TO ADDRESS ME AS "GREAT ALLEN." BUT WHEN IT'S JUST US YOU DON'T HAVE TO BECAUSE IT DOES SOUND SILLY.

BUT THE PAY'S GOOD!



WELL, UH...

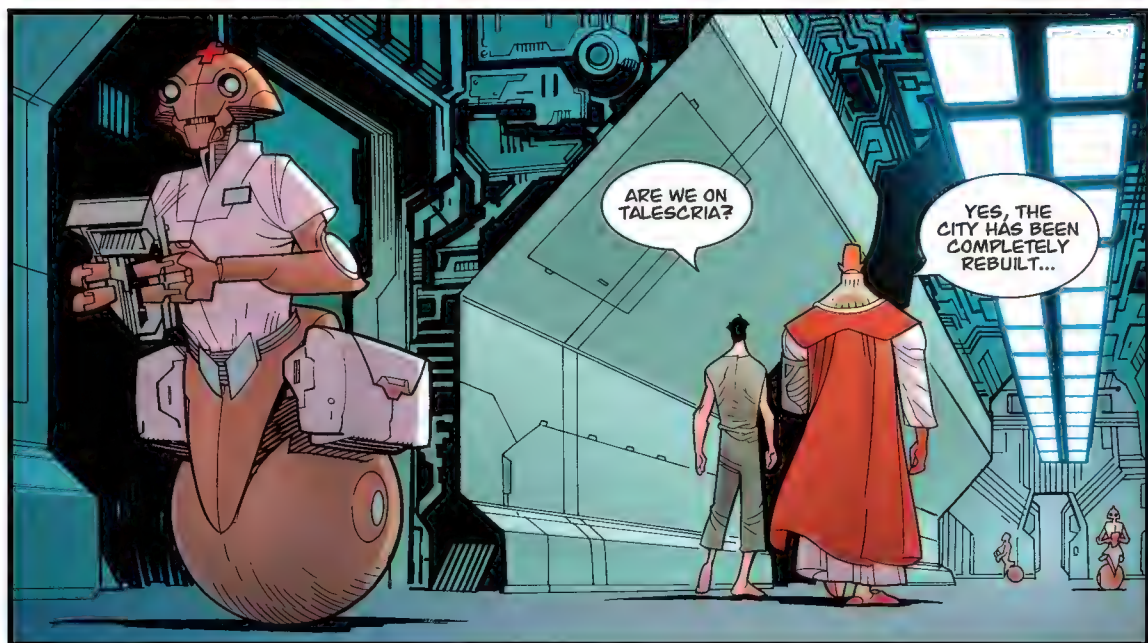
CONGRATS.

IS MY FATHER AROUND? I ASSUME HE WOKE UP BEFORE I DID.



HE DID... BY A FEW DAYS.

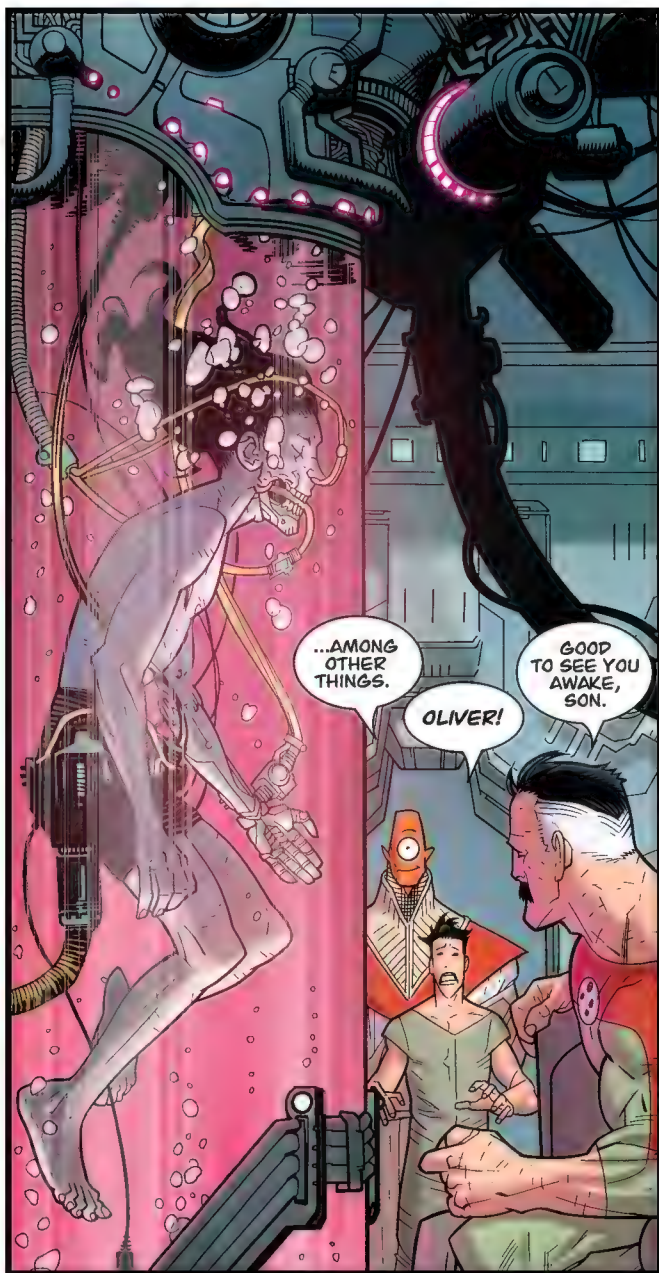
THIS WAY.



ARE WE ON TALESERIA?

YES, THE CITY HAS BEEN COMPLETELY REBUILT...

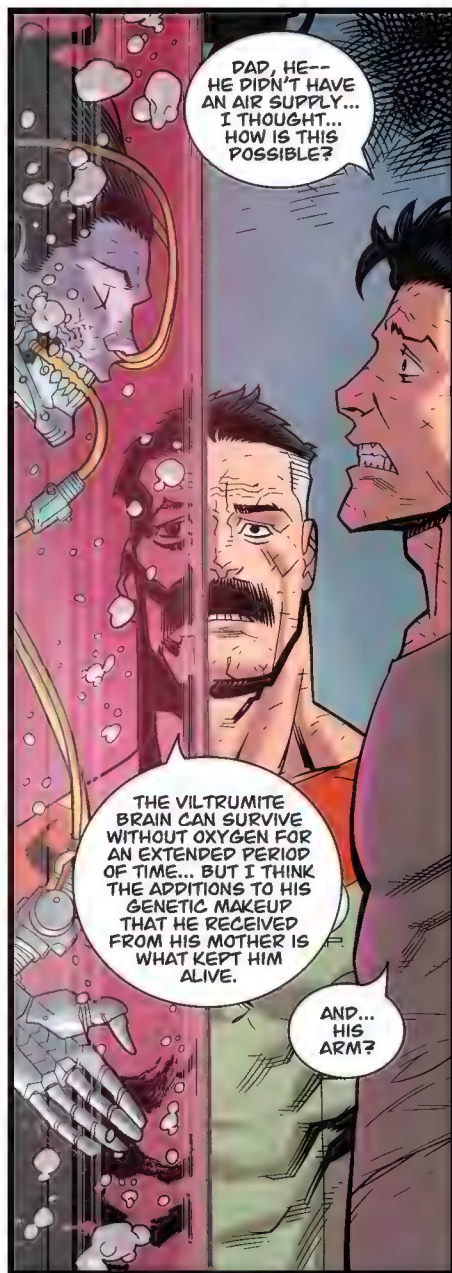




...AMONG  
OTHER  
THINGS.

OLIVER!

GOOD  
TO SEE YOU  
AWAKE,  
SON.



DAD, HE--  
HE DIDN'T HAVE  
AN AIR SUPPLY...  
I THOUGHT...  
HOW IS THIS  
POSSIBLE?

THE VILTRUMITE  
BRAIN CAN SURVIVE  
WITHOUT OXYGEN FOR  
AN EXTENDED PERIOD  
OF TIME... BUT I THINK  
THE ADDITIONS TO HIS  
GENETIC MAKEUP  
THAT HE RECEIVED  
FROM HIS MOTHER IS  
WHAT KEPT HIM  
ALIVE.

AND...  
HIS  
ARM?



THE SOLUTION  
HE'S SUSPENDED  
IN IS ENHANCING  
HIS NATURAL  
REGENERATIVE  
ABILITIES.

HIS OWN  
SKIN IS BEING  
GROWN OVER  
PROSTHETIC  
REPLACEMENTS  
FOR HIS ARM  
AND LOWER  
JAW.

HIS BRAIN  
SCANS ARE  
REMARKABLE. IF HIS  
HEALING KEEPS UP AT  
THIS PACE, HE SHOULD  
BE OUT OF THE TUBE IN  
ANOTHER WEEK, READY  
TO BEGIN HIS PHYSICAL  
REHABILITATION.

HE WON'T  
BE BACK UP  
TO FULL  
POWER ANY  
TIME SOON...  
BUT HE'S  
ALIVE.

HE'S  
ALIVE.





I'M SORRY  
TO INTERRUPT, HEH...  
GREAT ALLEN...  
BUT THE STATUS  
REPORT FROM THE  
OUTER TERRITORIES  
HAS COME IN.

AND?



NOTHING.  
LIKE  
ALWAYS.

ABSOLUTELY  
NOTHING.



WHAT  
DOES  
HE MEAN  
"NOTHING?"

THE  
VILTRUMITES  
AREN'T  
ATTACKING?



ATTACKING?

HEH...  
THEY'RE  
NOT DOING  
ANYTHING.



WHAT  
DO YOU  
MEAN?

THEY'VE  
DISAPPEARED,  
MARK. SINCE  
THE BATTLE OF  
VILTRUM... THERE'S  
BEEN NO SIGN OF  
THEM. IT'S AS  
THOUGH THEY'VE  
VANISHED.





GRANTED, SPACE IS A BIG PLACE, AND THEY CAN CERTAINLY TRAVEL GREAT DISTANCES IN LITTLE TIME... BUT WE'VE GOT EYES IN ALL QUADRANTS OF THE GALAXY.

IT WOULD BE VERY HARD TO HIDE FROM US.

WE'VE SEARCHED ALL THE FORMER PLANETS OF THE VILTRUM EMPIRE TO SEE IF SOMEONE MIGHT POSSIBLY BE HARBORING THEM. **THEY'RE NOT.**

WITHOUT THOSE PLANETS TO BACK THEM, THEIR NUMBERS DWINDLE TO THE POINT THAT ANY FRONTAL ASSAULT AGAINST US WOULD BE INEFFECTIVE AT BEST, **DISASTROUS** AT WORST.

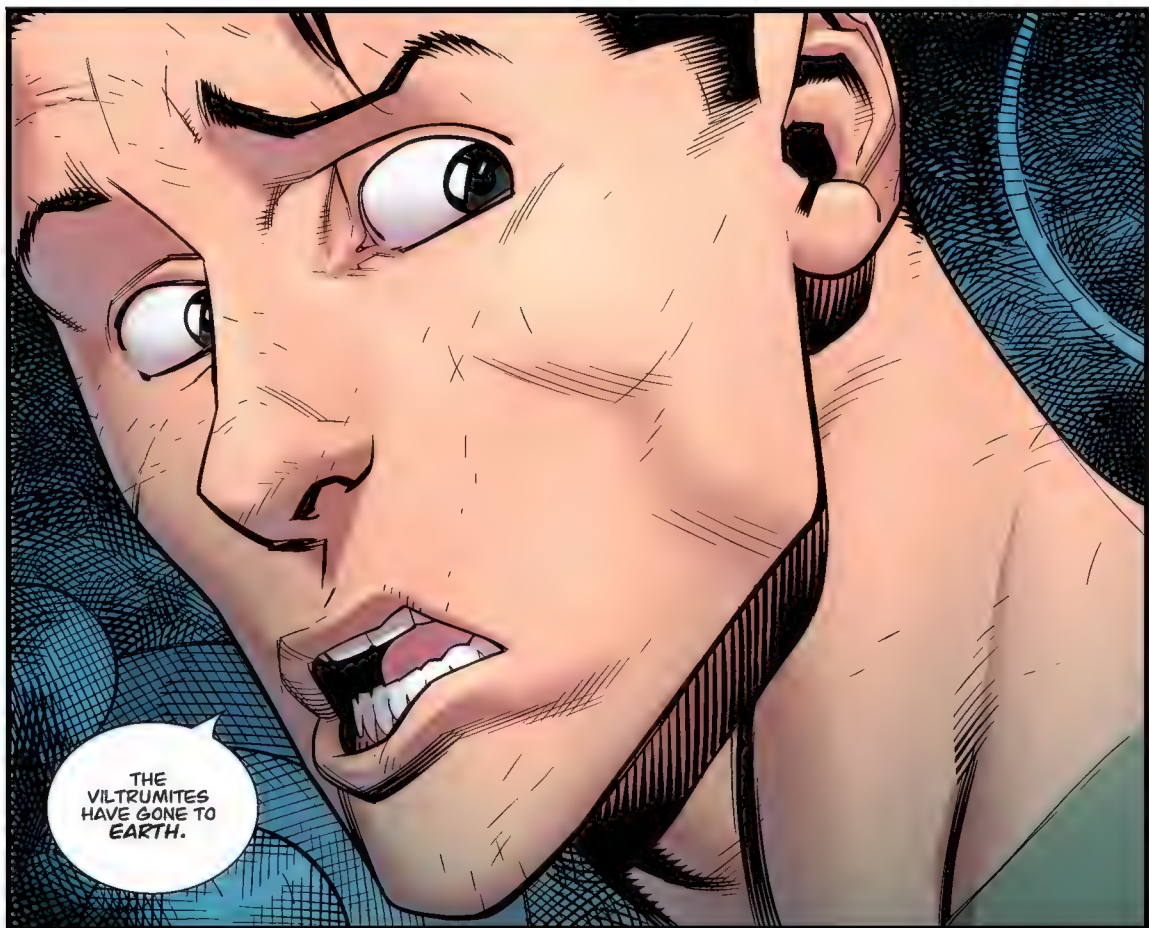
SO IT MAKES SENSE THAT THEY WOULD LAY LOW FOR A WHILE, REGROUP, PREPARE FOR A SERIES OF SMALL, CALCULATED ASSAULTS.

CONVENTIONAL WISDOM WOULD HAVE THEM ATTACKING THEIR FORMERLY OCCUPIED PLANETS, IT WOULD TAKE LITTLE EFFORT TO TURN THEM BACK TO THEIR SIDE... AND EVENTUALLY THEY WOULD AGAIN COMMAND A FORCE LARGE ENOUGH TO DESTROY US.

WE'VE BEEN STATIONING OUR TROOPS WITH THESE PLANETS IN PREPARATION FOR THIS. A DELAY OF THIS LONG, ESPECIALLY WITH THEM KNOWING YOU AND YOUR FATHER AND BROTHER WERE OUT OF COMMISSION FOLLOWING OUR LAST BATTLE... MAKES NO SENSE...

...NO SENSE AT ALL.











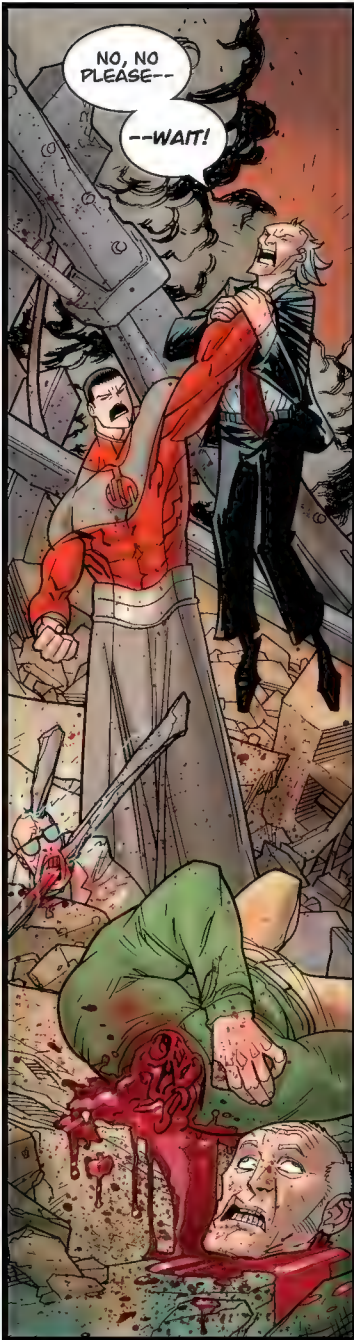
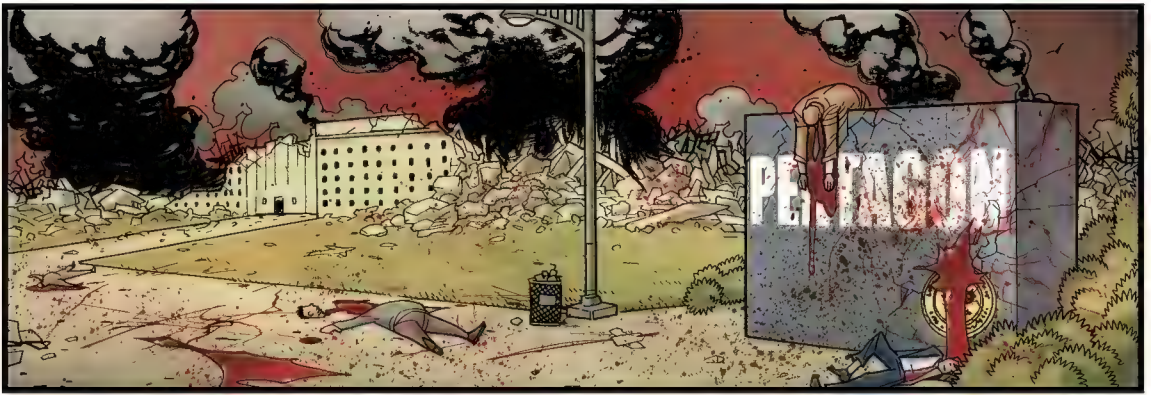
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Ryan  
Townsend  
+ico



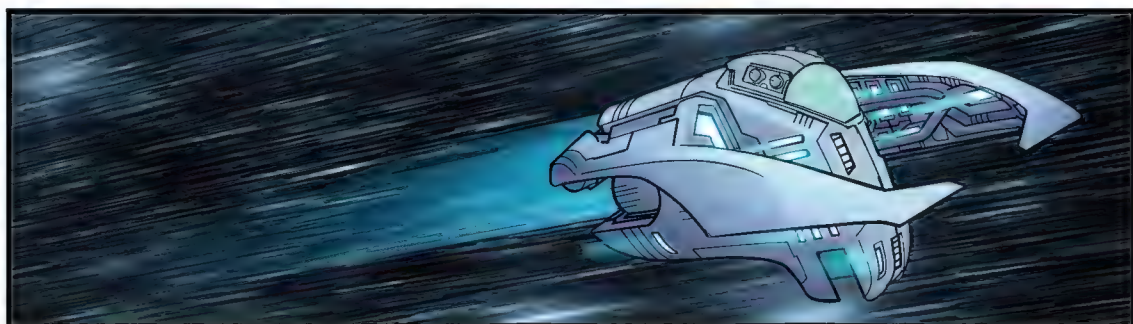














TALESCRIA, HEADQUARTERS OF THE COALITION OF PLANETS.



THE MOVERS WON'T BE HERE FOR AT LEAST TWENTY MINUTES. PLENTY OF TIME IF YOU WANT TO--

TELIA, PLEASE... NOT NOW.



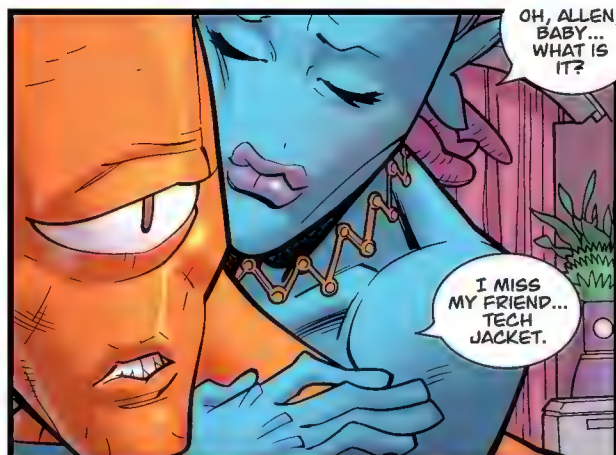
YOUR FRIENDS WILL BE FINE. THOSE VILTRUMITES PROBABLY JUST WENT INTO HIDING.

DON'T WORRY ABOUT THEM. I BET WE DON'T HEAR FROM THEM FOR YEARS.

I DO NOT HAVE THE LUXURY OF TIME TO WORRY ABOUT THE VILTRUMITES. I COMMAND ALL THE PLANETS IN THE COALITION, NOW... I'VE GOT FAR TOO MUCH TO WORRY ABOUT.

STILL, I CAN'T STAND THAT WE JUST DON'T KNOW WHERE THEY WENT... PART OF ME, I HATE TO ADMIT, WISHES THEY DID GO TO EARTH... AT LEAST THEN, WE'D KNOW.

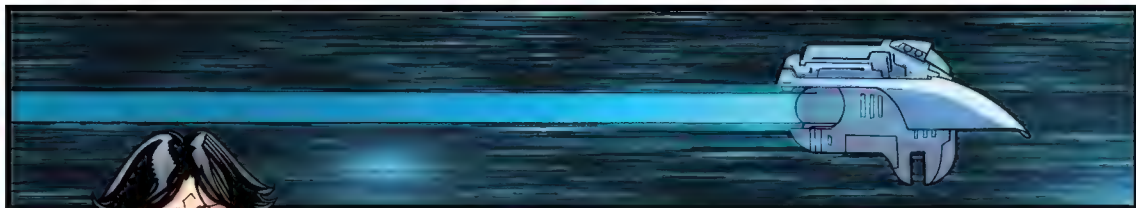
BUT... THAT'S NOT ALL OF IT...



OH, ALLEN, BABY... WHAT IS IT?

I MISS MY FRIEND... TECH JACKET.





I KNOW I'M NOWHERE NEAR AS STRONG AS YOU GUYS--BUT I JUST WANT YOU TO KNOW, WHATEVER WE'RE HEADING INTO, WHATEVER WE'RE UP AGAINST...

I'M TOTALLY THERE FOR YOU.

EARTH IS MY HOME, TOO-- AND I'M GOING TO DO EVERYTHING I CAN TO TAKE OUT AS MANY VILTRUMITES AS I CAN.

ALLEN LET ME KEEP A LOT OF THE WEAPONS THEY ARMED ME WITH THAT WERE MADE FROM THE THINGS YOU'D WRITTEN ABOUT IN YOUR BOOKS, NOLAN--AND I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT HOW I'LL BEST USE THEM TO STAY IN THE FIGHT AND KEEP THEM FROM GETTING NEAR ME.

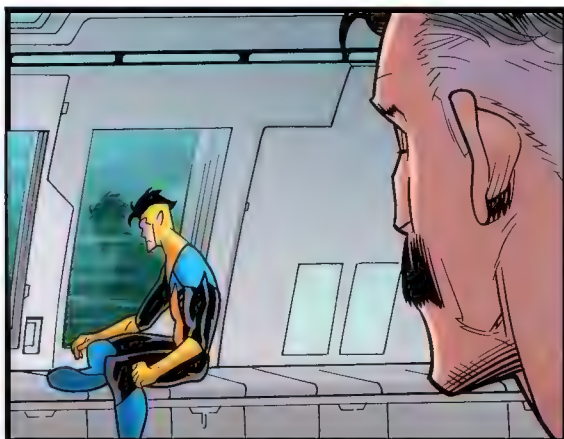
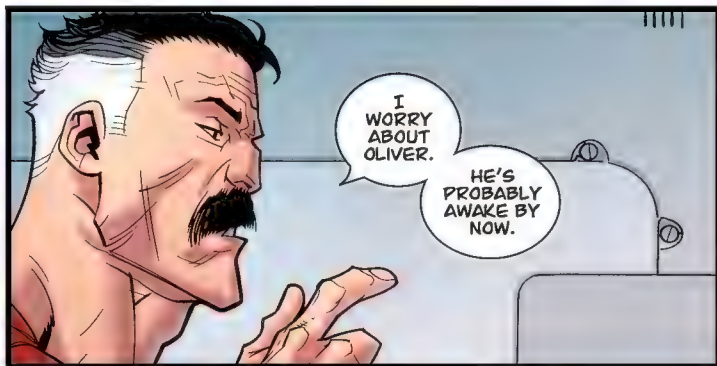
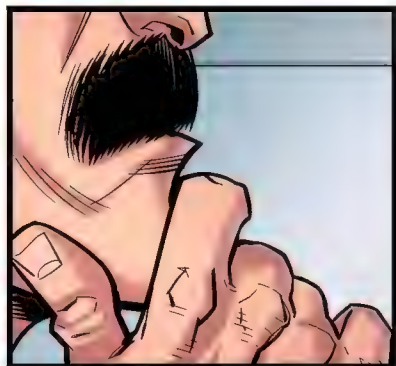
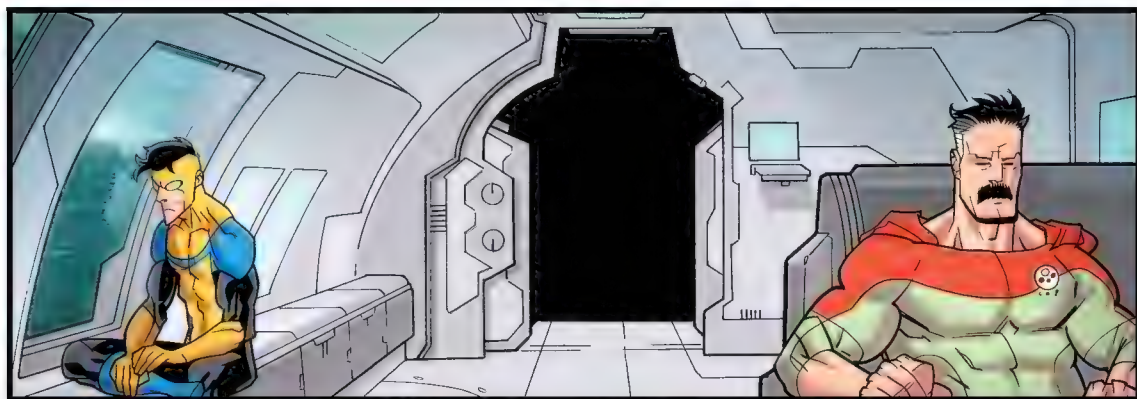
I CAN ASSURE YOU, I'LL DO EVERYTHING I CAN TO--

--HELP SAVE EARTH FROM THOSE DUDES...

...AND THEN I'M GOING TO MAKE SWEET LOVE TO YOUR FACES IN CELEBRATION.

YOU GUYS SUCK.

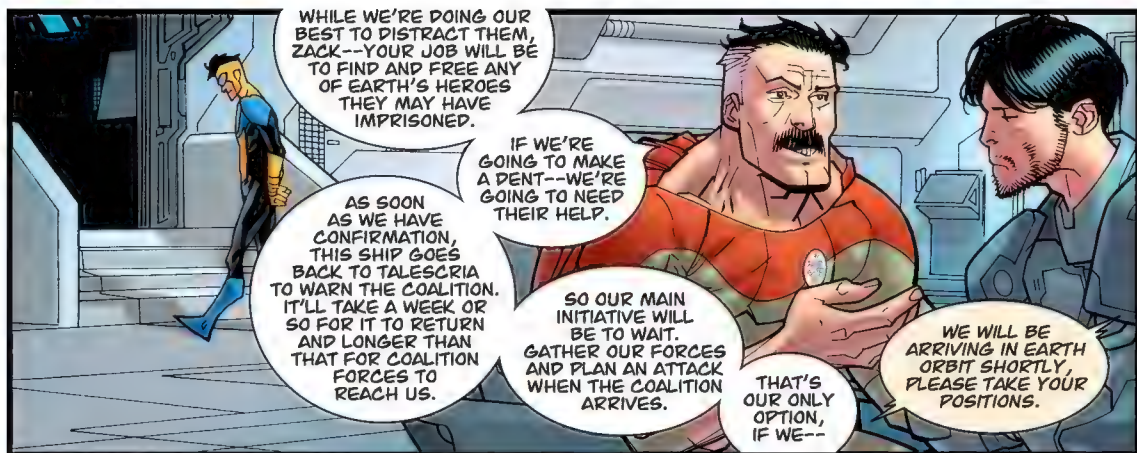




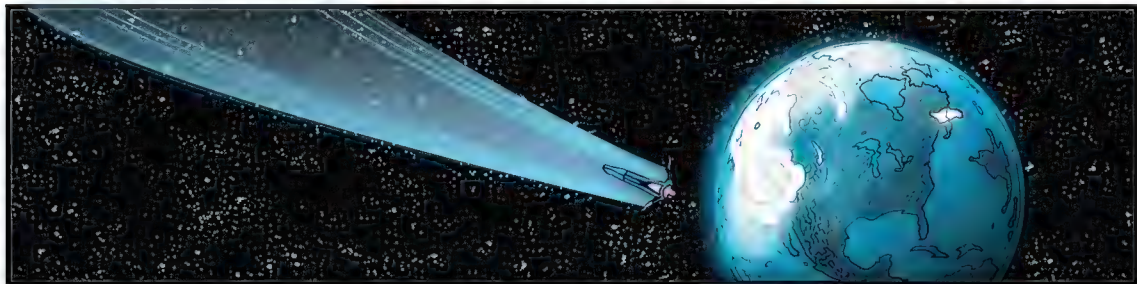
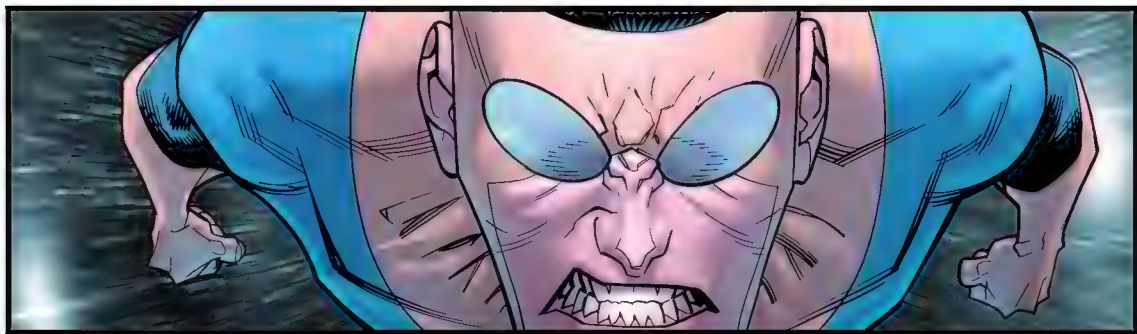




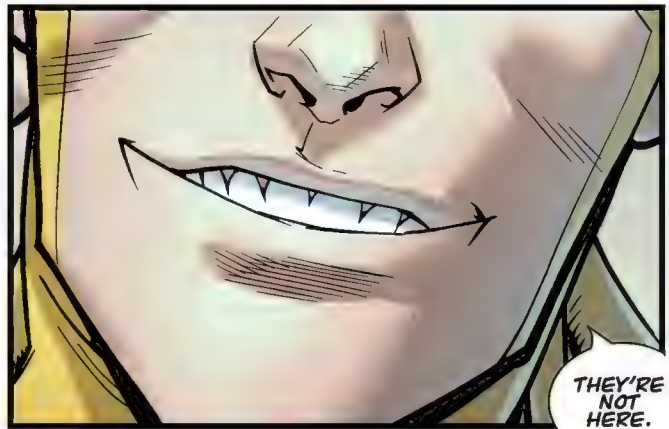










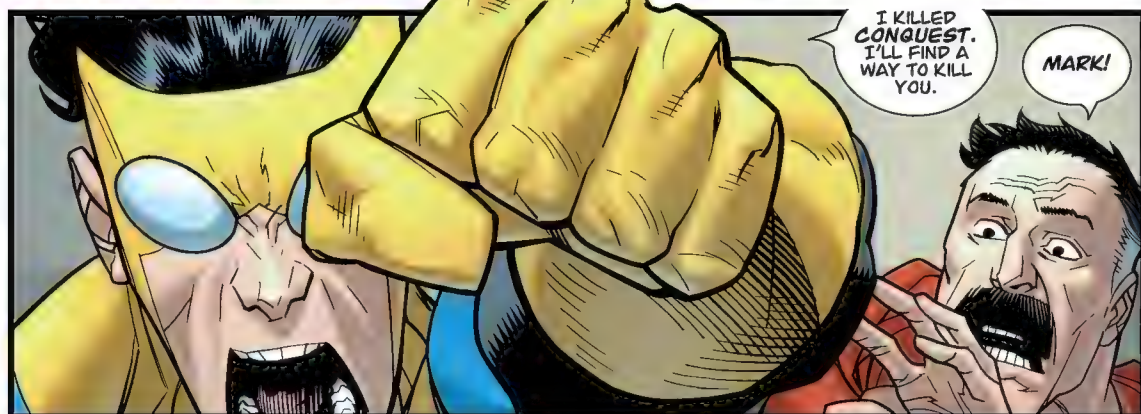




WE VERY  
MUCH ARE  
HERE.



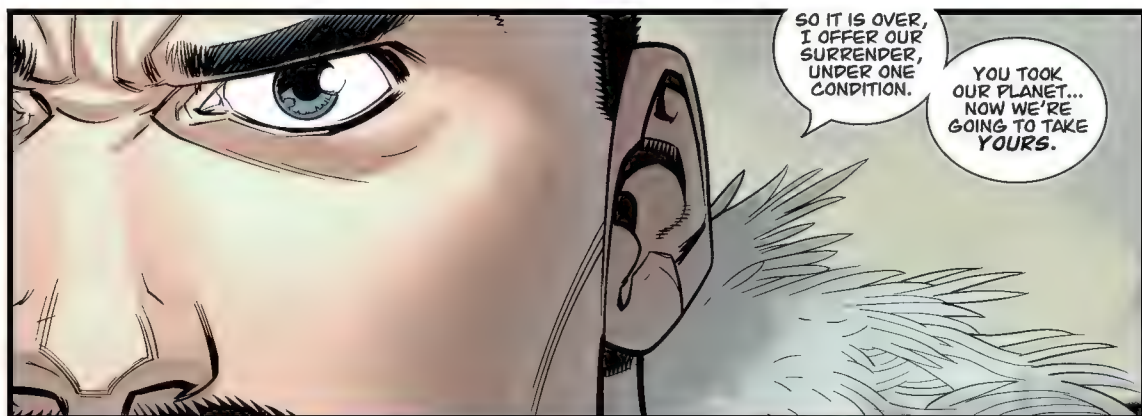














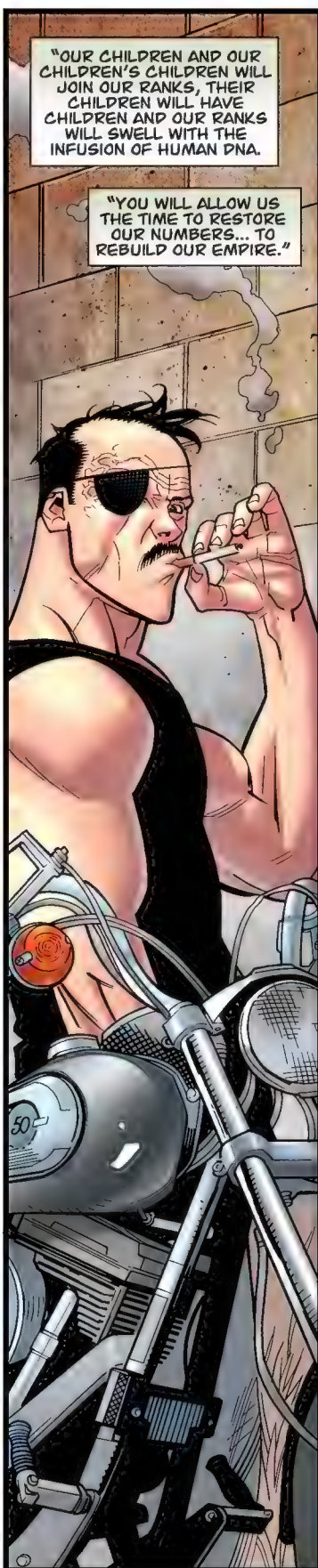






THIS IS THE ONLY WAY TO ENSURE THE SURVIVAL OF THE VILTRUMITE PEOPLE.

WE WILL RESTORE OUR RANKS OVER THE COURSE OF THOUSANDS OF YEARS. HUMAN DNA HAS BEEN PROVEN TO MAKE NEAR PERFECT HYBRIDS... THE CLOSEST THING WE HAVE TO PURE-BLOODED VILTRUMITES.



"OUR CHILDREN AND OUR CHILDREN'S CHILDREN WILL JOIN OUR RANKS, THEIR CHILDREN WILL HAVE CHILDREN AND OUR RANKS WILL SWELL WITH THE INFUSION OF HUMAN DNA.

"YOU WILL ALLOW US THE TIME TO RESTORE OUR NUMBERS... TO REBUILD OUR EMPIRE."



THOUGH THE TWO OF YOU WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DESTRUCTION OF OUR HOME WORLD, YOU WILL PROVIDE US WITH OUR ULTIMATE SALVATION.

THE TWO OF YOU REPRESENT THE FUTURE OF OUR PEOPLE, WHAT WE WILL BECOME-- WHAT WE **MUST** BECOME IN ORDER TO SURVIVE.

THIS IS HOW THINGS MUST BE.











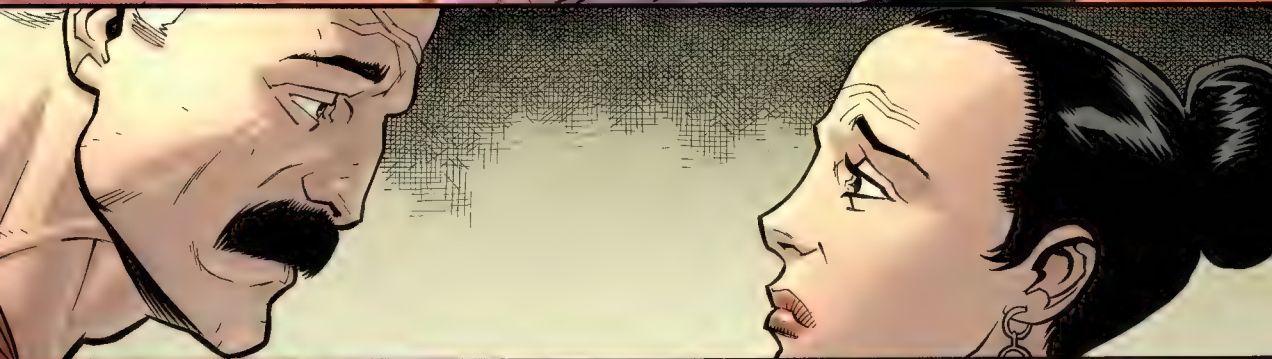








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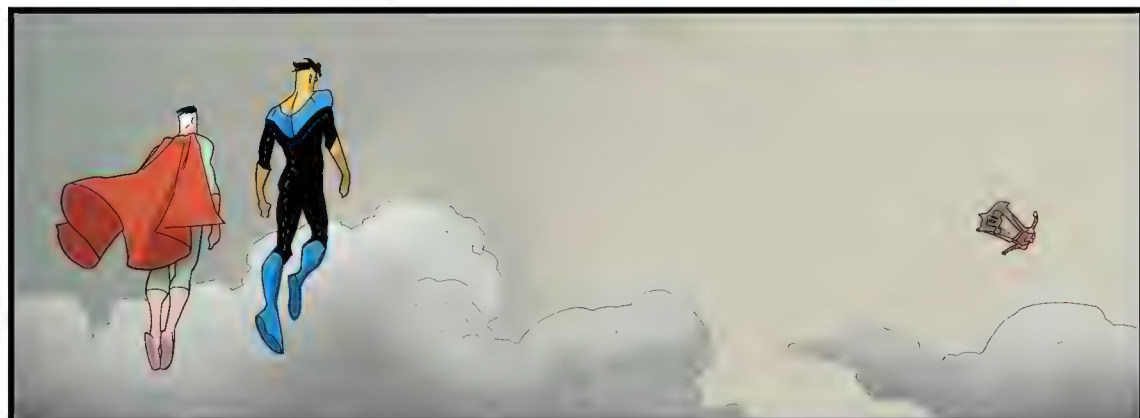


YOU HAVE  
CHOSEN  
WISELY.

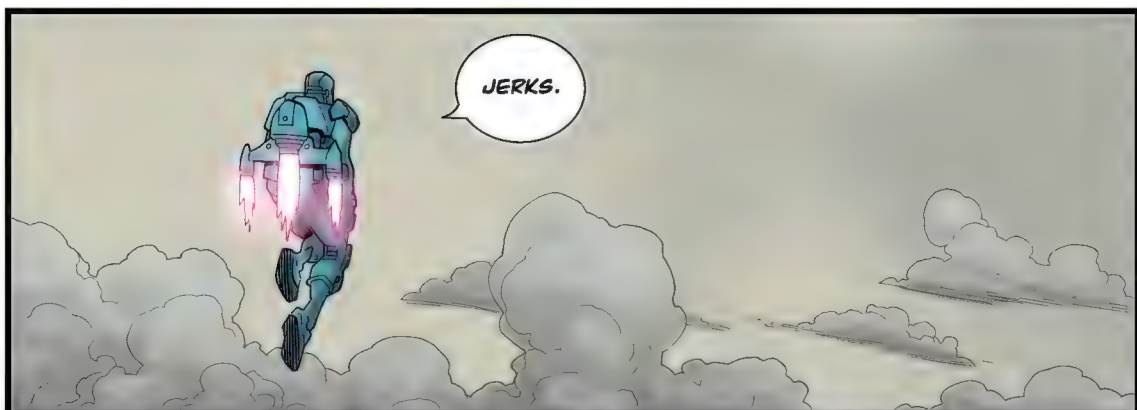
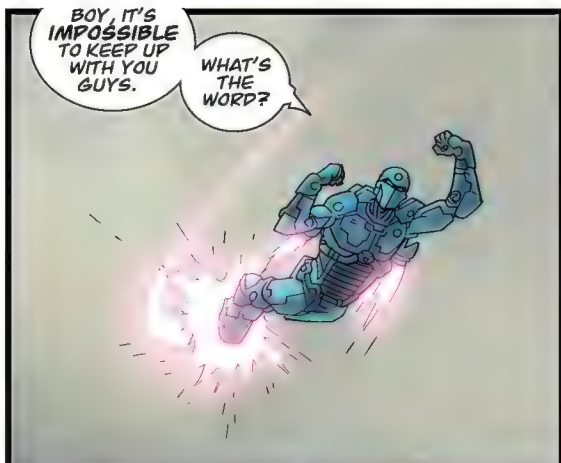
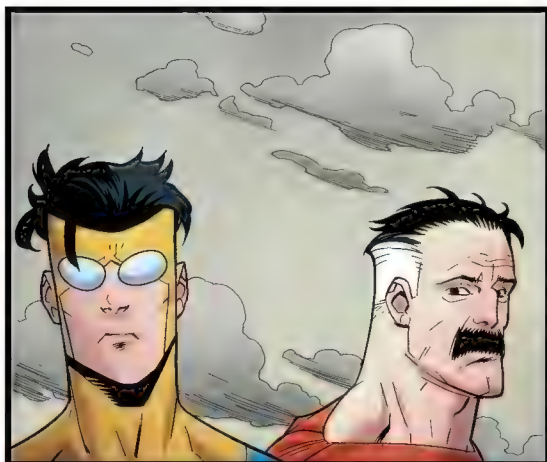
YOU HAVE  
MY WORD. WHILE  
WE LIVE AMONG  
YOU, NO HARM  
WILL COME TO YOUR  
PEOPLE BY THE  
HAND OF ANY  
VILTRUMITE.

THE TRUTH  
IS, BY ALLOWING  
US TO LIVE HERE,  
THE TWO OF YOU  
MAY VERY WELL  
HAVE BECOME  
THE SAVIORS  
OF OUR  
PEOPLE.

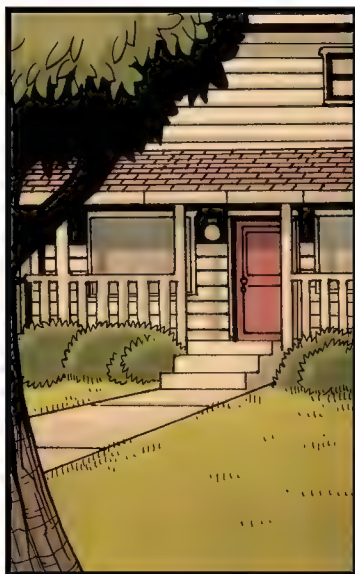
IRONIC.











YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND, PAUL... I DON'T WANT ANY OF THIS CRAP.

I DON'T WANT TO LOOK AT IT.



THERE ARE TOO MANY MEMORIES ATTACHED. YEAH, GOOD AND BAD ONES.

IT DOES UPSET ME. I CAN ADMIT THAT I MISS YOU A LITTLE BIT. THAT DOESN'T CHANGE THINGS.

THAT'S NOT MY FAULT AND YOU KNOW IT.

NO.

JUST--

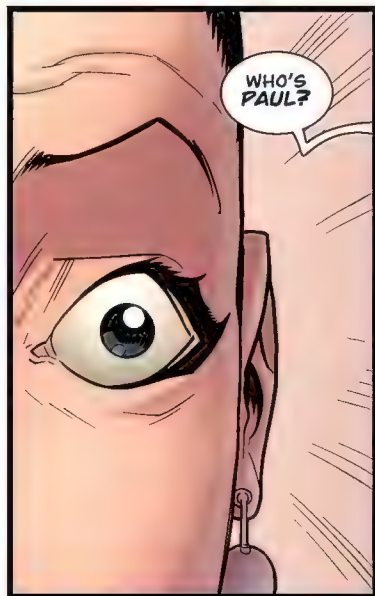
JUST COME OVER TODAY AND GET THIS CRAP OR I'M THROWING IT AWAY.



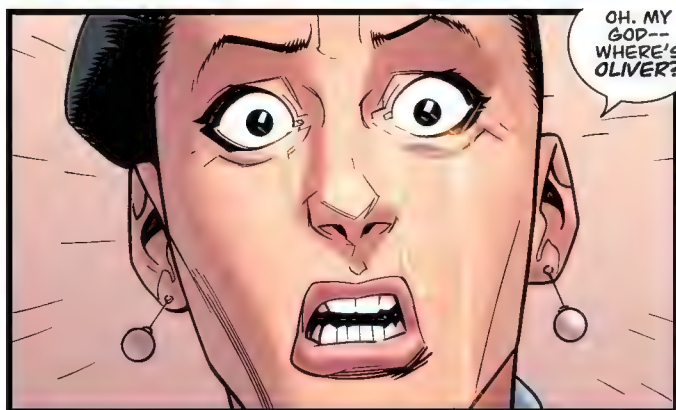
SCREW YOU, PAUL.



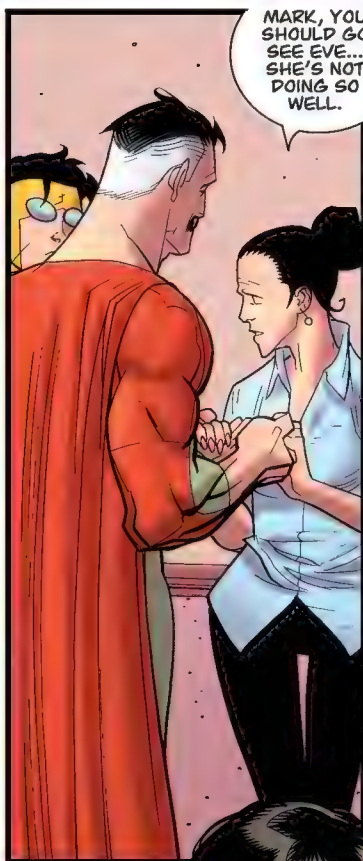
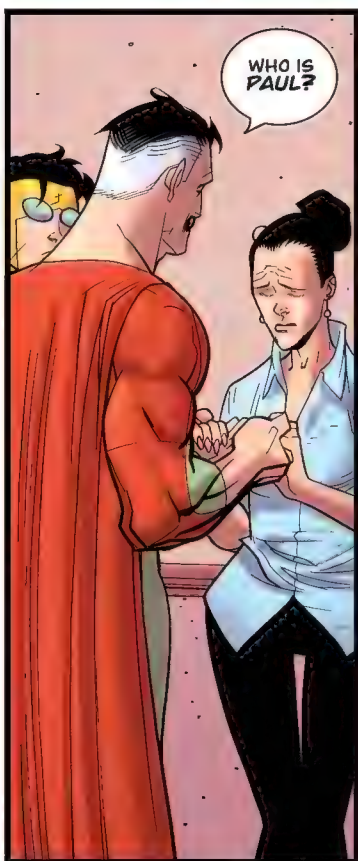
WHO'S PAUL?



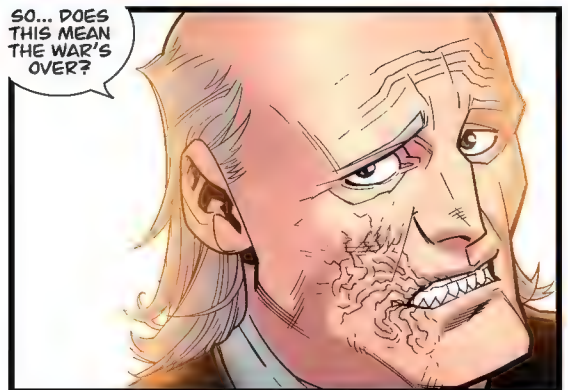
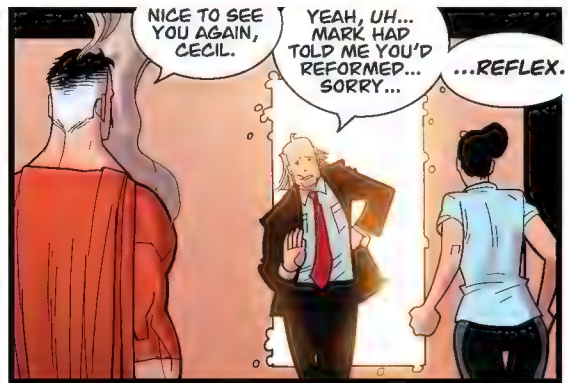
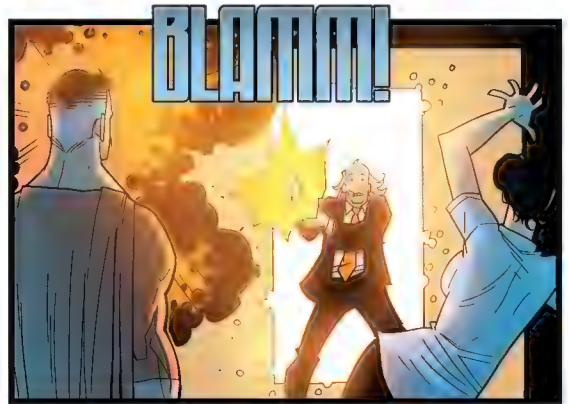
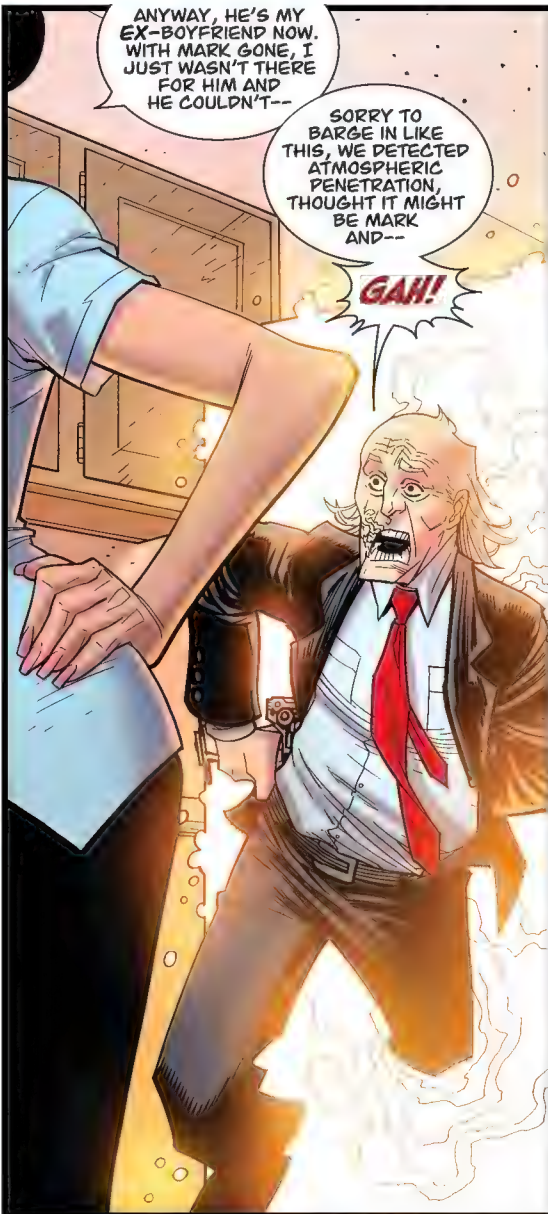
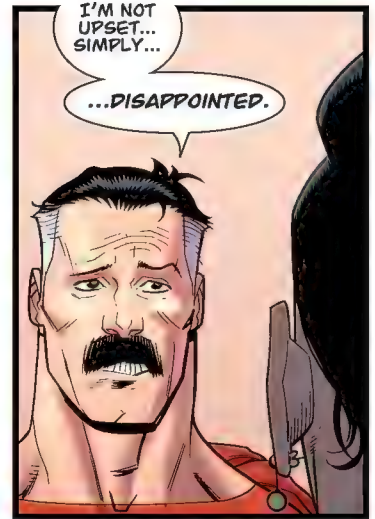
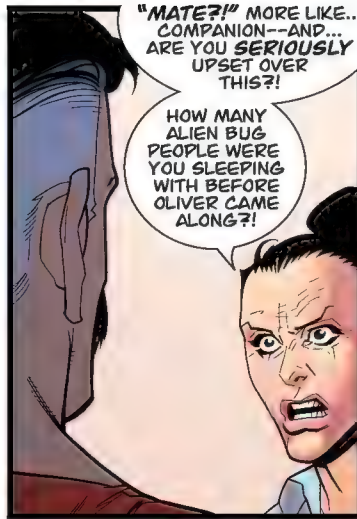




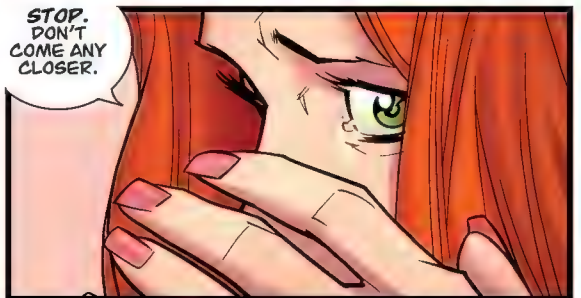
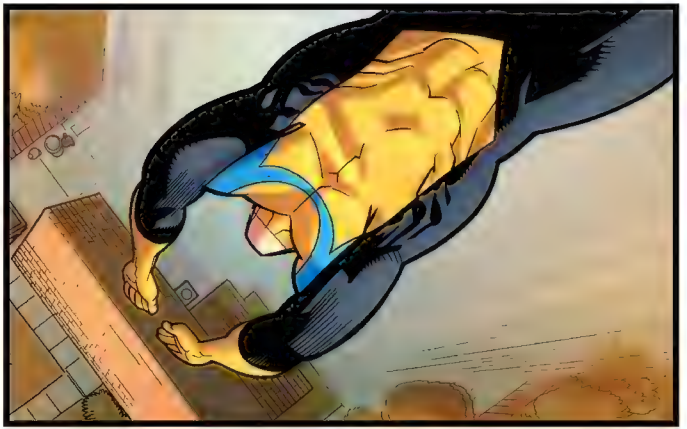
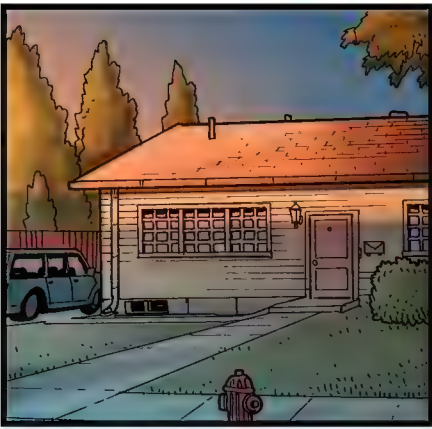








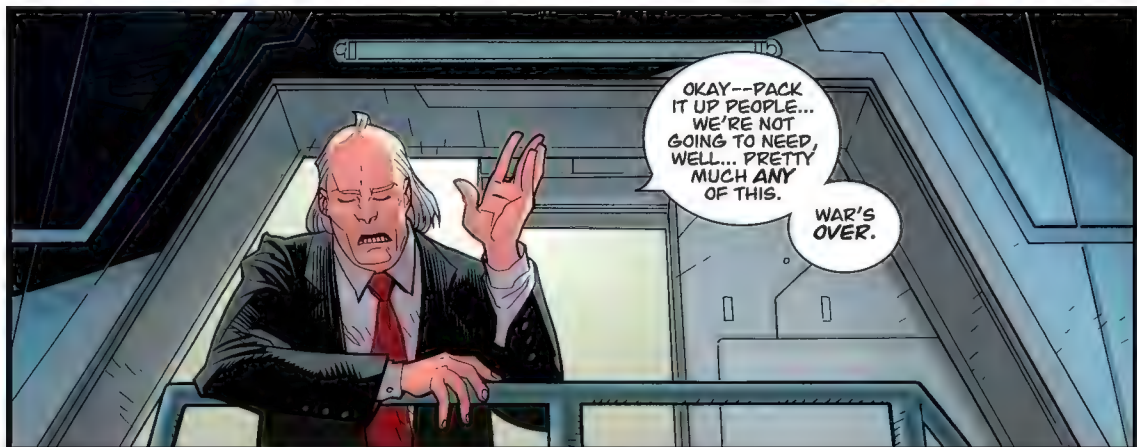
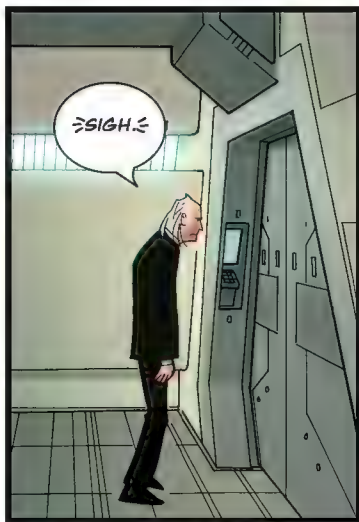
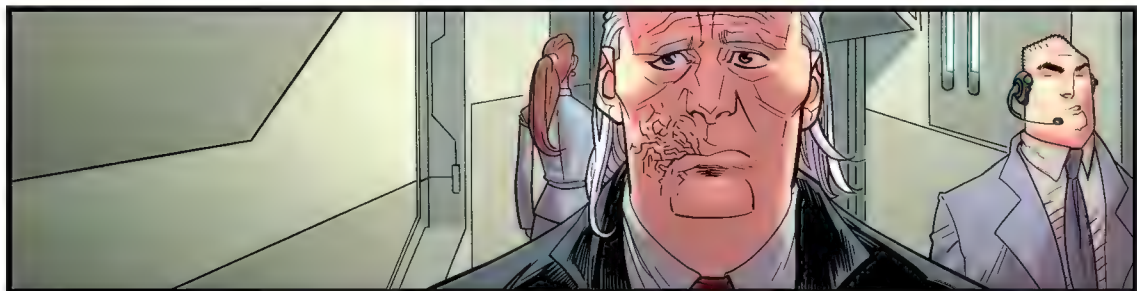
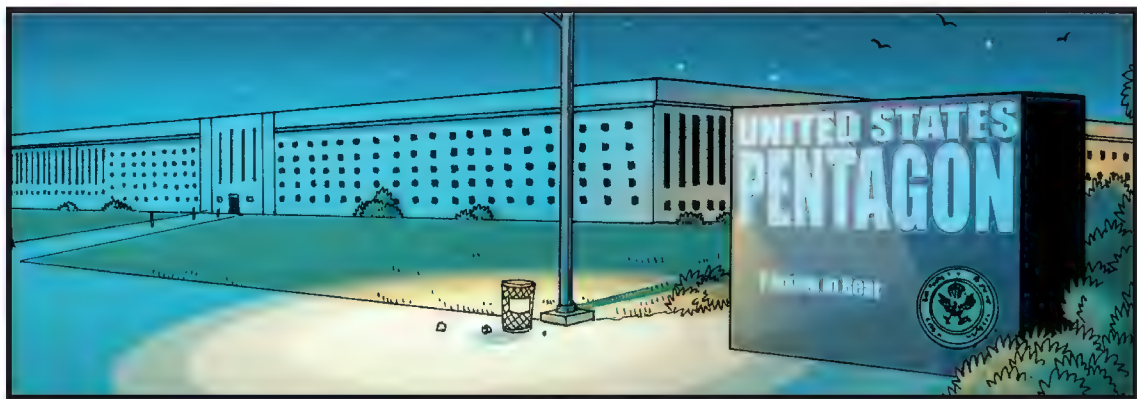










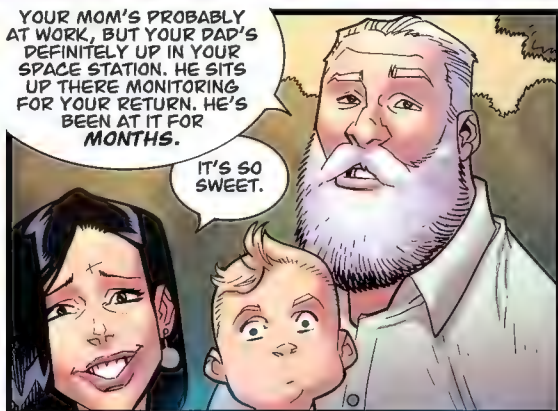
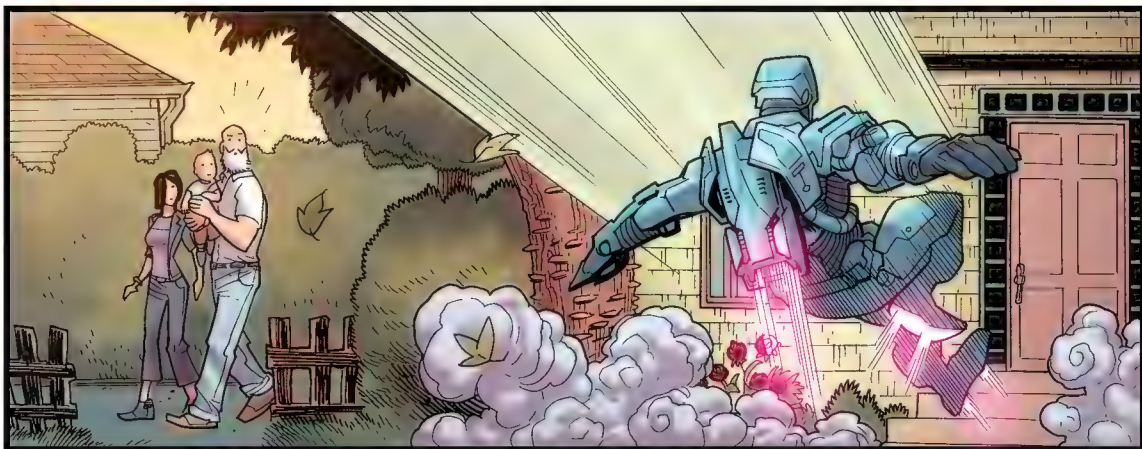






BUMMER.









I'VE BEEN KEEPING THE BUSINESS GOING. BULLETPROOF HAS BEEN HELPING OUT. IT'S BEEN TOUGH, BUT I'VE MANAGED.

GOT MY POWERS BACK, TOO... AT LEAST... IT SEEMS THEY'VE STOPPED ACTING UP.

WELL, THAT'S GREAT NEWS.

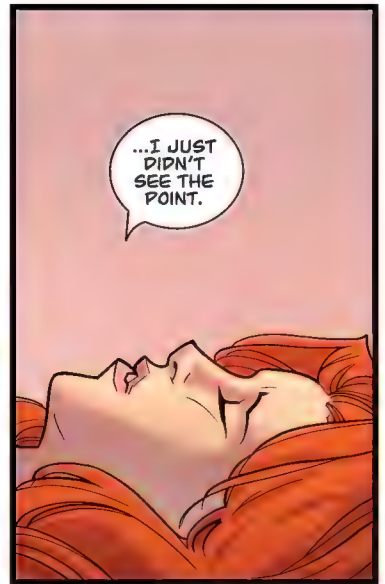


AND YOU'RE STILL LIVING HERE AT HOME?

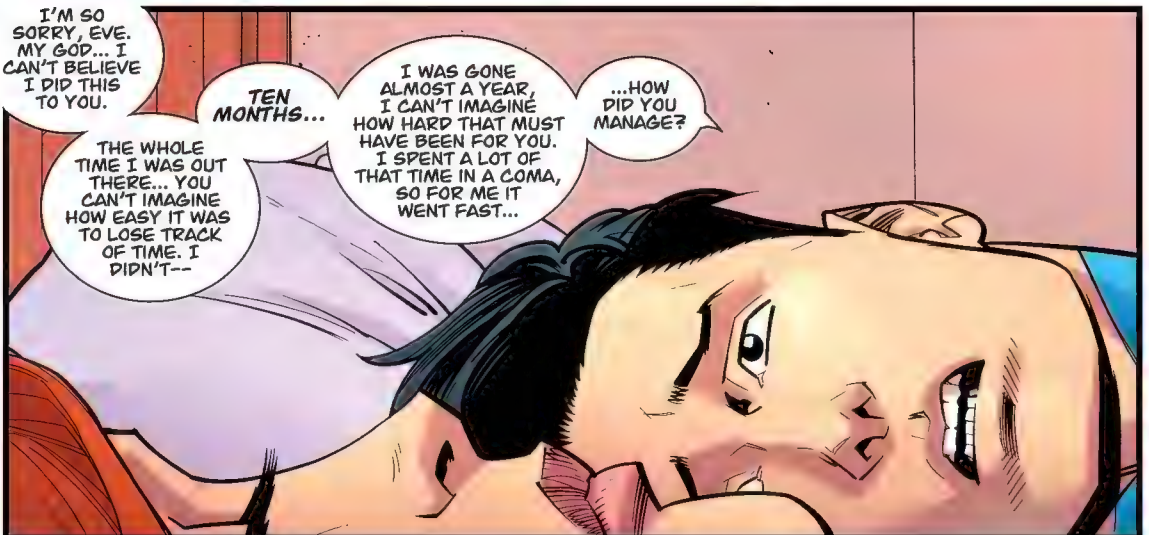


I'VE GOT MORE THAN ENOUGH MONEY SAVED UP TO BUY SOME LAND, AND WITH MY POWERS WORKING AGAIN I COULD BUILD SOMETHING SIMILAR TO WHAT I HAD IN AFRICA...

BUT WITH YOU GONE...



...I JUST DIDN'T SEE THE POINT.



I'M SO SORRY, EVE. MY GOD... I CAN'T BELIEVE I DID THIS TO YOU.

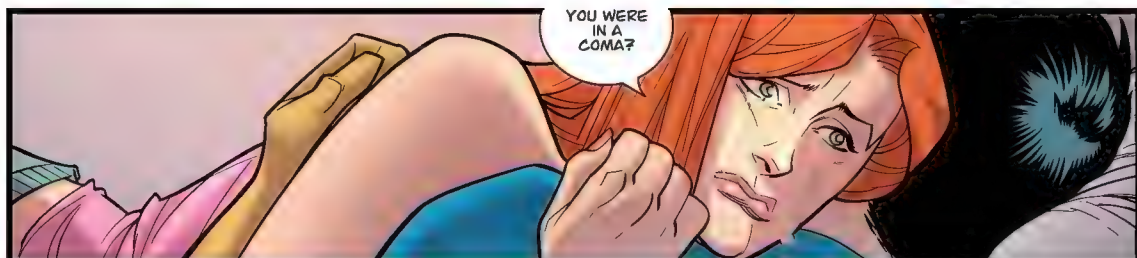
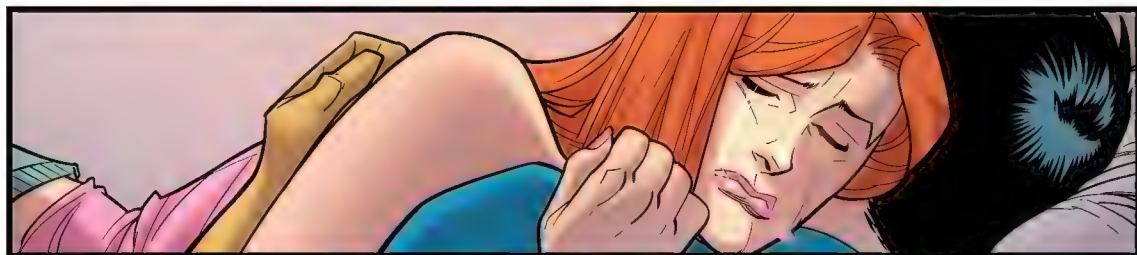
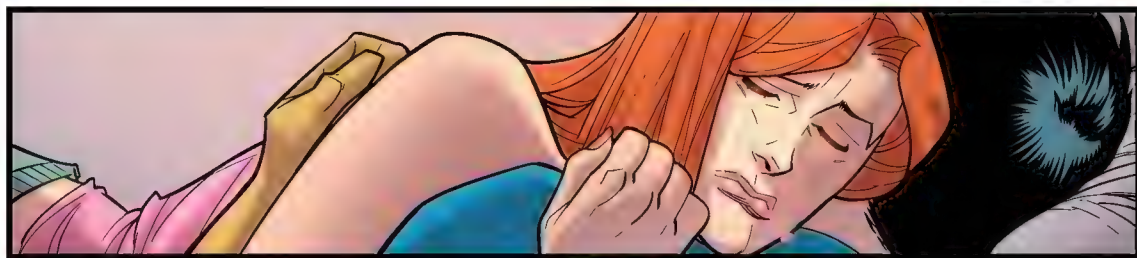
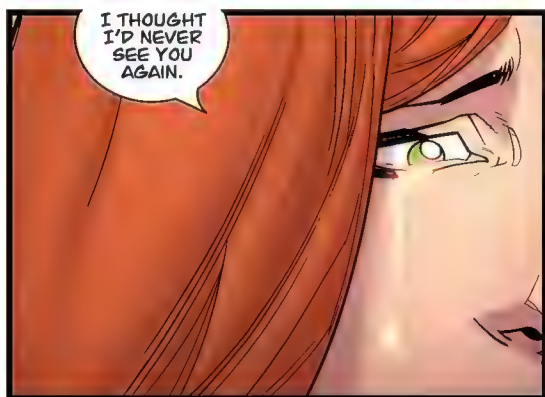
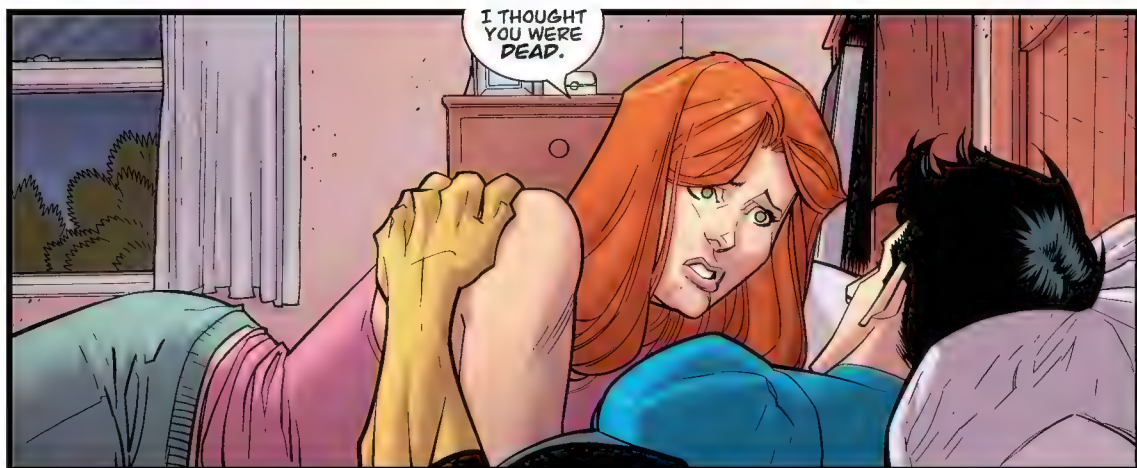
TEN MONTHS...

THE WHOLE TIME I WAS OUT THERE... YOU CAN'T IMAGINE HOW EASY IT WAS TO LOSE TRACK OF TIME. I DIDN'T--

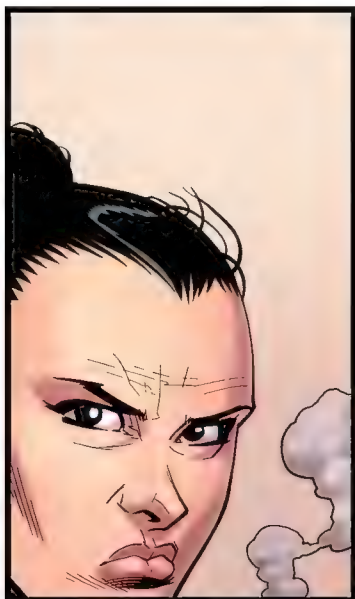
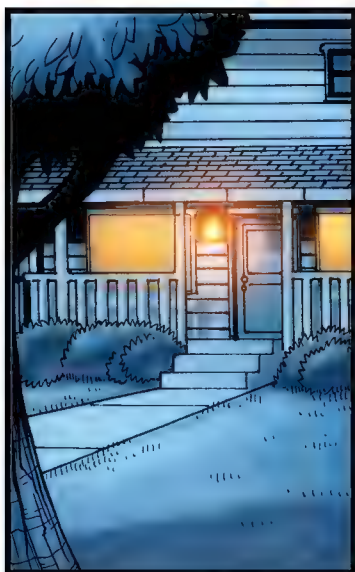
I WAS GONE ALMOST A YEAR, I CAN'T IMAGINE HOW HARD THAT MUST HAVE BEEN FOR YOU. I SPENT A LOT OF THAT TIME IN A COMA, SO FOR ME IT WENT FAST...

...HOW DID YOU MANAGE?

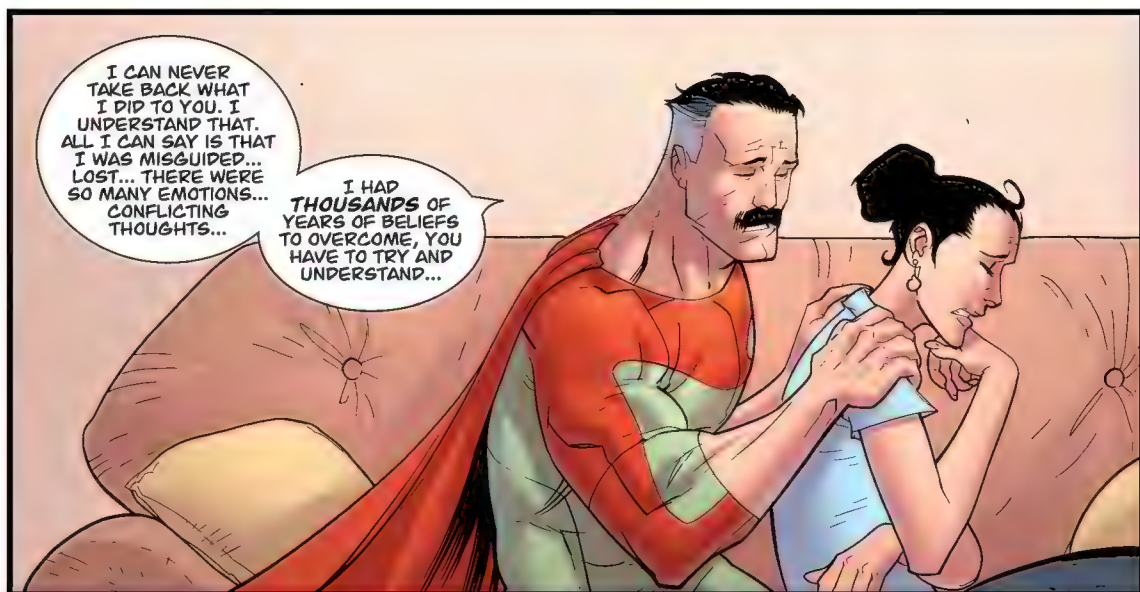




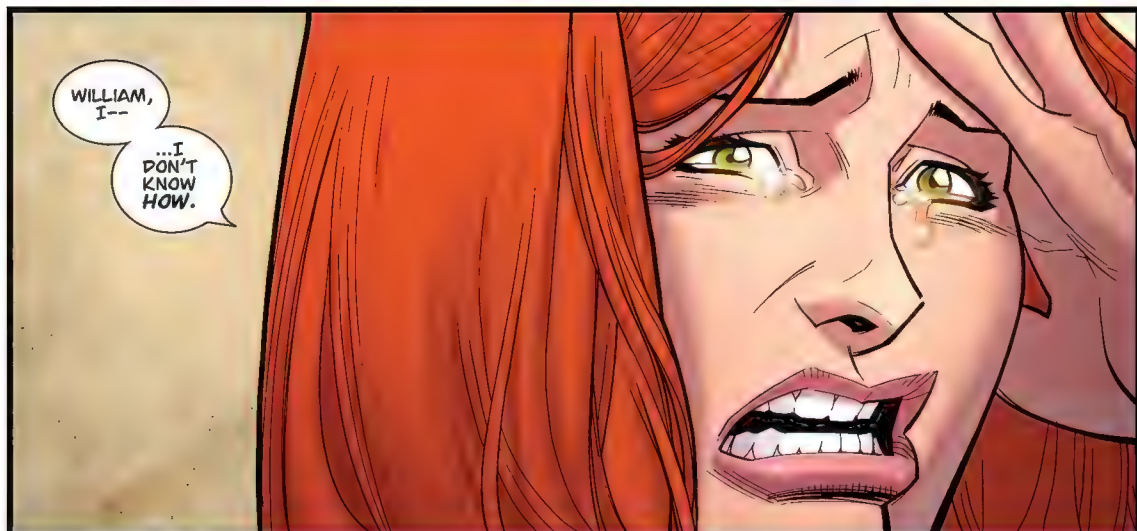




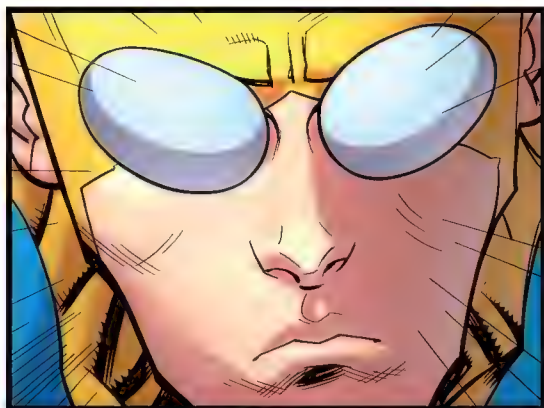
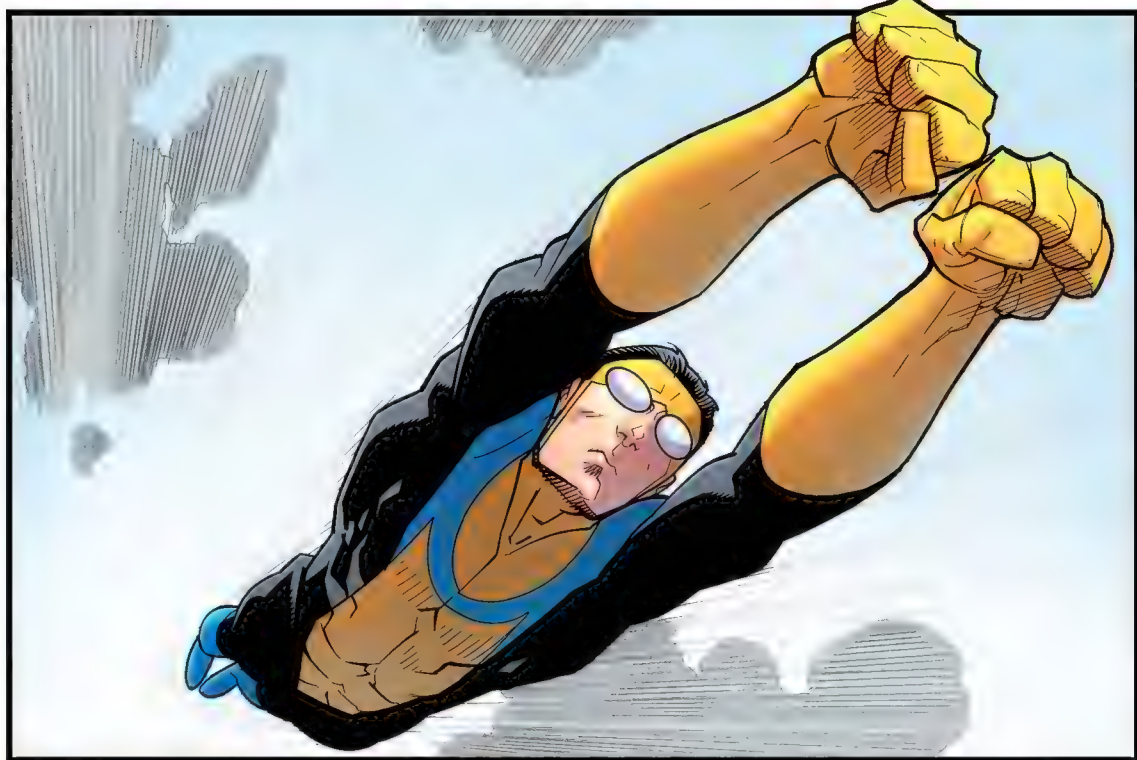
















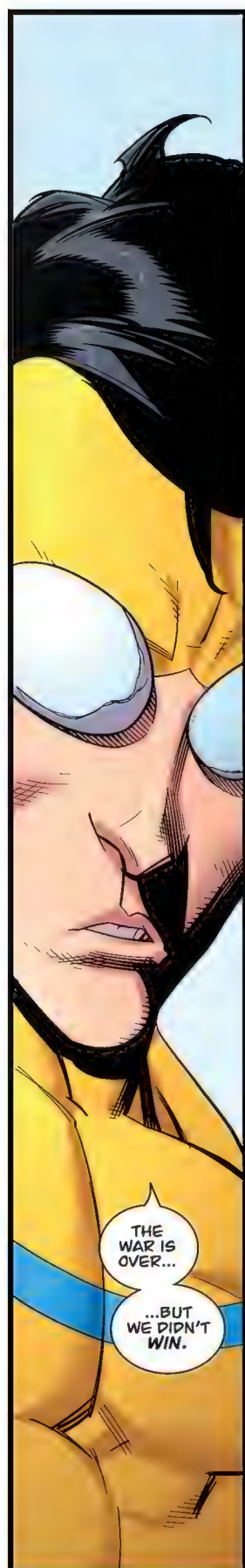
I KILLED  
CONQUEST.

WE  
DESTROYED  
VILTRUM.

WE ENDED  
THE VILTRUM  
EMPIRE.

...

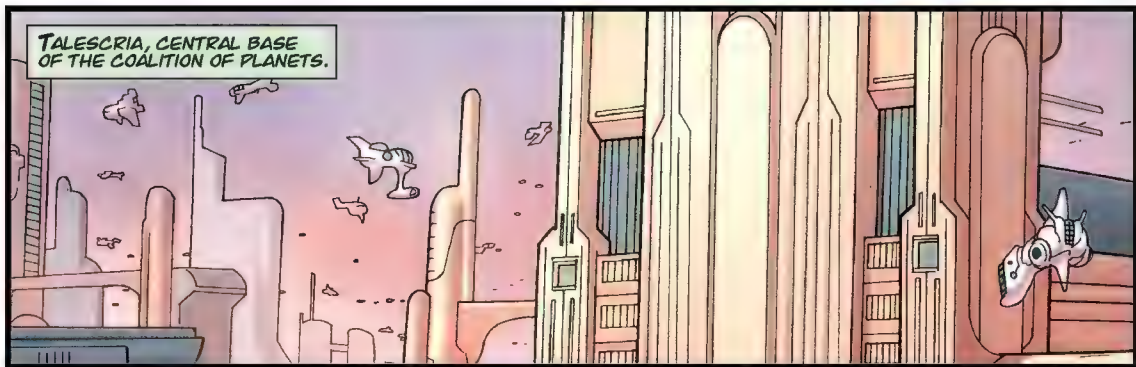
BUT  
NOW  
THEY'RE  
HERE...



THE  
WAR IS  
OVER...

...BUT  
WE DIDN'T  
WIN.





TALESCRIA, CENTRAL BASE  
OF THE COALITION OF PLANETS.



GREAT ALLEN, I  
APOLOGIZE FOR MY  
INTRUSION... BUT  
THIS INFO TABLET  
WAS DELIVERED  
FOR YOU.

IT WAS  
MARKED  
URGENT.

UH...  
THANK  
YOU. I'LL  
TAKE IT.



ALLEN, IF YOU ARE  
READING THIS,  
THEN I AM DEAD.

FORGIVE MY ARROGANCE,  
BUT IF I HAVE MET MY  
END, I CAN ONLY ASSUME  
THE WAR AGAINST THE  
VILTRUMITES HAS TAKEN A  
TURN FOR THE WORSE.

THERE IS A WEAPON  
THAT I REGRET TO  
INFORM YOU I HAVE  
KEPT A SECRET.



THERE IS A SECRET  
PASSAGE IN MY  
CHAMBER, I HAVE  
MARKED ITS LOCATION  
ON THIS BLUEPRINT.

AS MY CHOSEN  
SUCCESSOR, YOU  
SHOULD NOT HAVE  
DIFFICULTY  
GAINING ACCESS.



I APOLOGIZE THAT  
I HAD TO KEEP THIS  
SECRET, BUT WITH  
VILTRUMITES AS OUR  
ALLIES, I HAD TO  
CONSIDER THIS AS  
A LAST RESORT.





THE SCOURGE VIRUS.

THE VIRUS THAT  
RAVAGED THE  
VILTRUMITE  
POPULATION...  
NEARLY KILLED  
THEM ALL.

THIS IS A STRONGER  
STRAIN, PERFECTED...  
IT WILL NOT FAIL  
THIS TIME.

IF THE WAR EFFORT APPEARS  
LOST, I URGE YOU TO USE IT...  
IGNORE YOUR ATTACHMENT  
TO OUR VILTRUMITE ALLIES.



FOR THE GOOD OF  
THE UNIVERSE.

ERADICATE ALL  
VILTRUM LIFE...  
FOREVER.

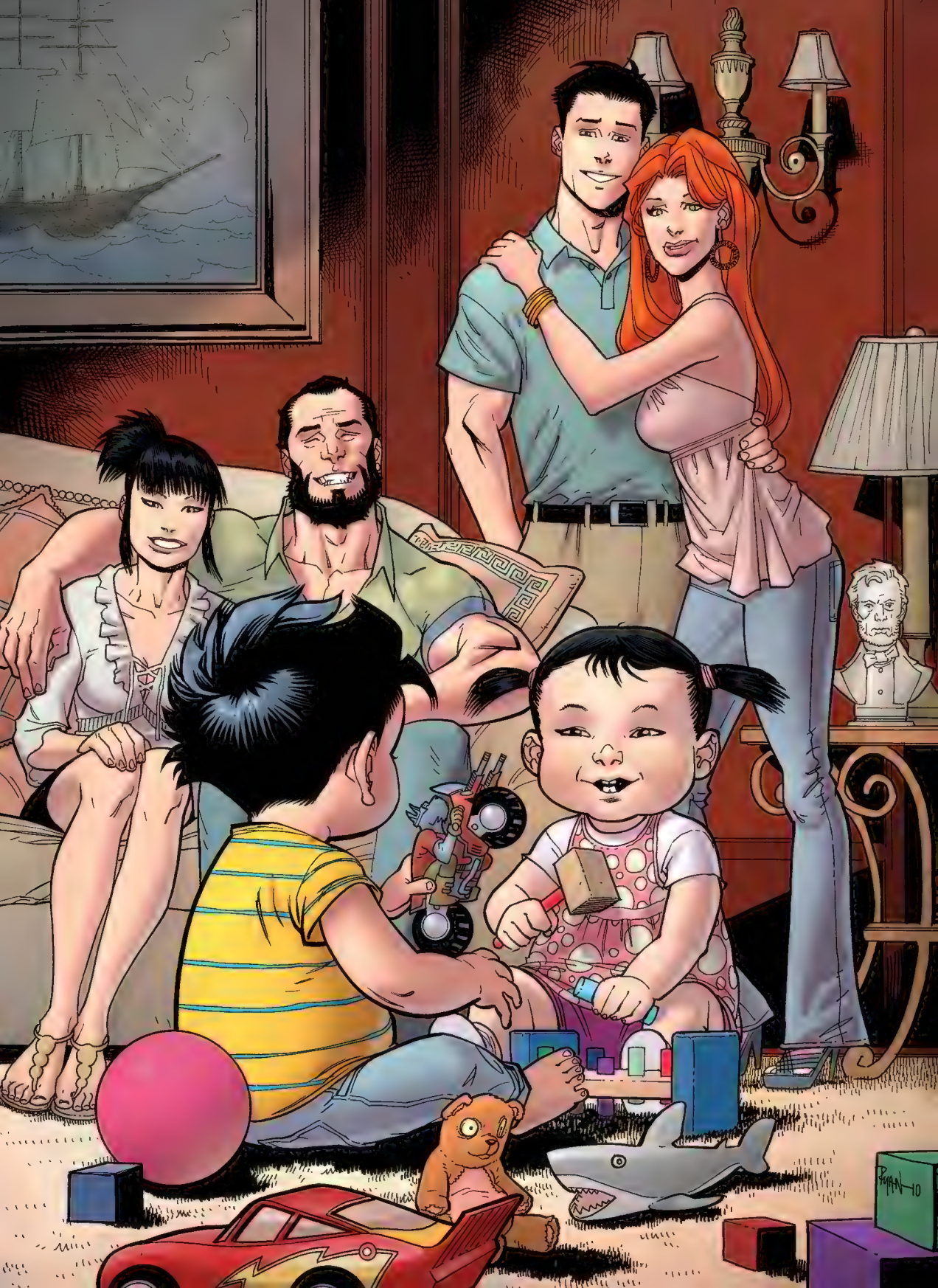
WHATEVER YOU DO,  
MAKE CERTAIN THAT  
I DID NOT DIE IN VAIN.  
-THAEDUS.



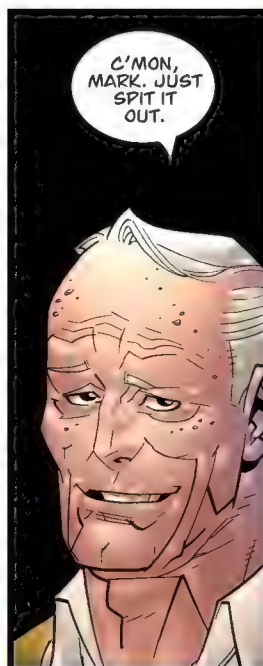
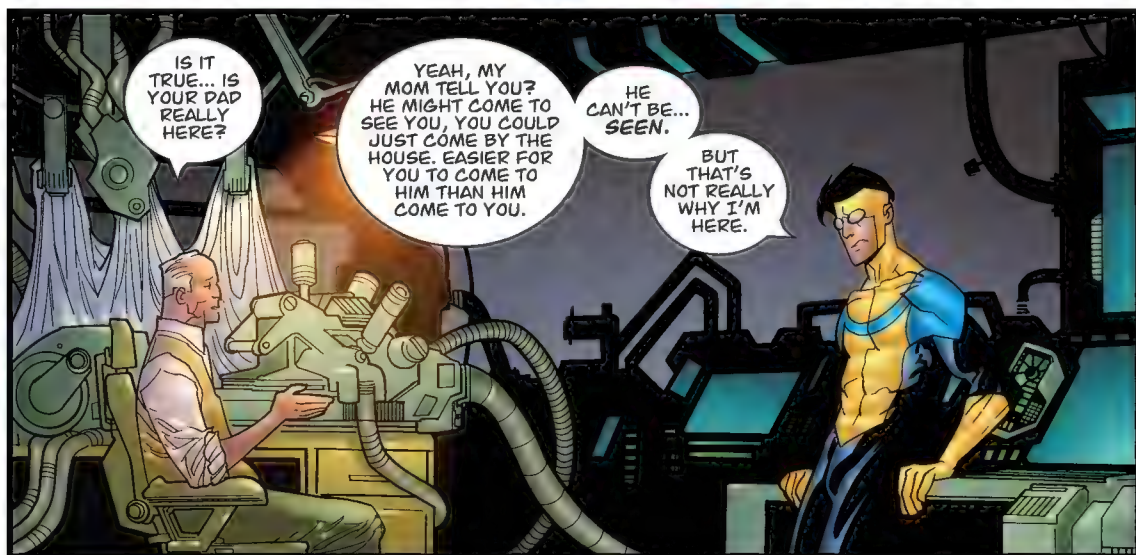
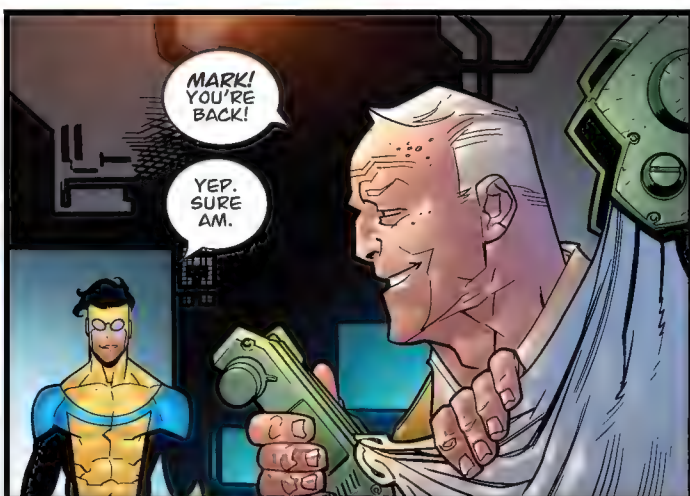




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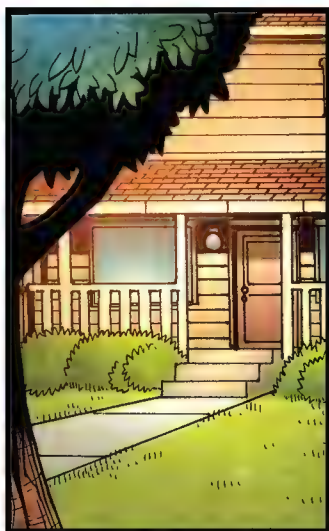










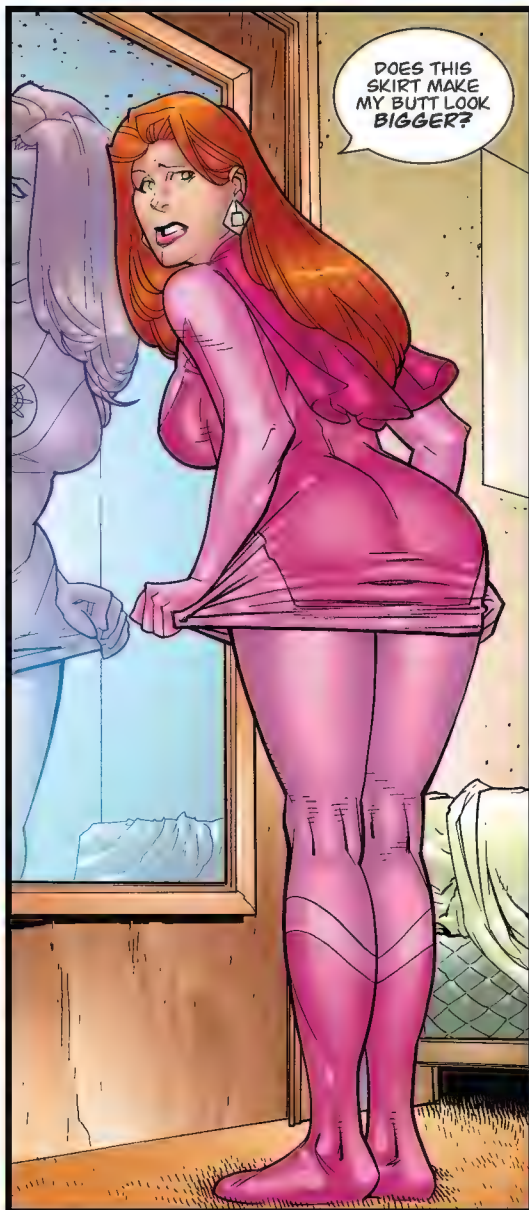
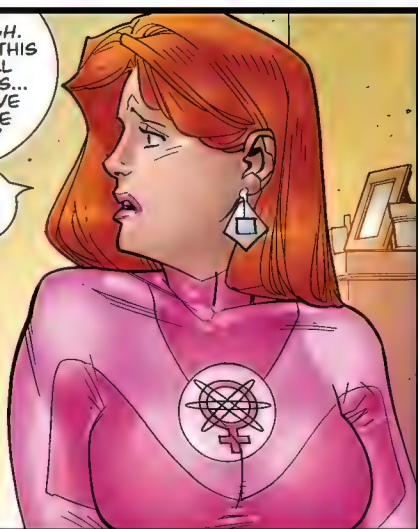


WHOA! ARE YOU GOING OUT? SOMETHING GOING ON?

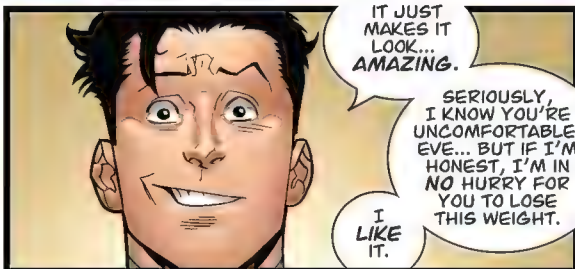


NO, I WAS--UGH. JUST SEEING IF THIS COSTUME STILL WORKED... I WAS... WHY'D YOU HAVE TO COME HOME RIGHT NOW?

JUST...



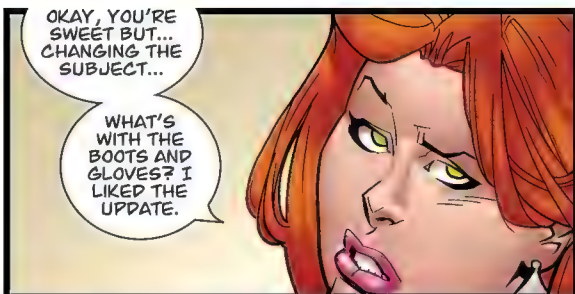
DOES THIS SKIRT MAKE MY BUTT LOOK BIGGER?



IT JUST MAKES IT LOOK... AMAZING.

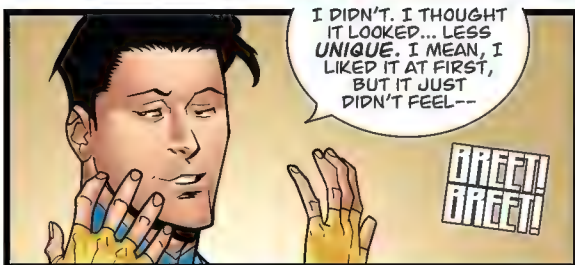
SERIOUSLY, I KNOW YOU'RE UNCOMFORTABLE, EVE... BUT IF I'M HONEST, I'M IN NO HURRY FOR YOU TO LOSE THIS WEIGHT.

I LIKE IT.



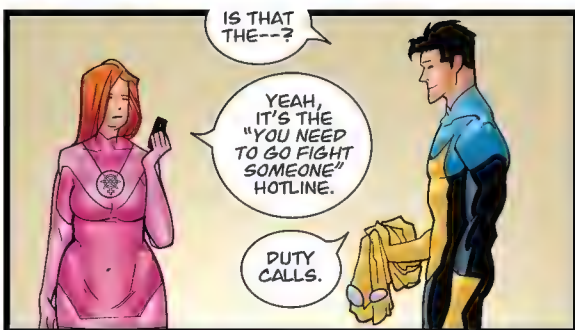
OKAY, YOU'RE SWEET BUT... CHANGING THE SUBJECT...

WHAT'S WITH THE BOOTS AND GLOVES? I LIKED THE UPDATE.



I DIDN'T. I THOUGHT IT LOOKED... LESS UNIQUE. I MEAN, I LIKED IT AT FIRST, BUT IT JUST DIDN'T FEEL--

BREET!  
BREET!

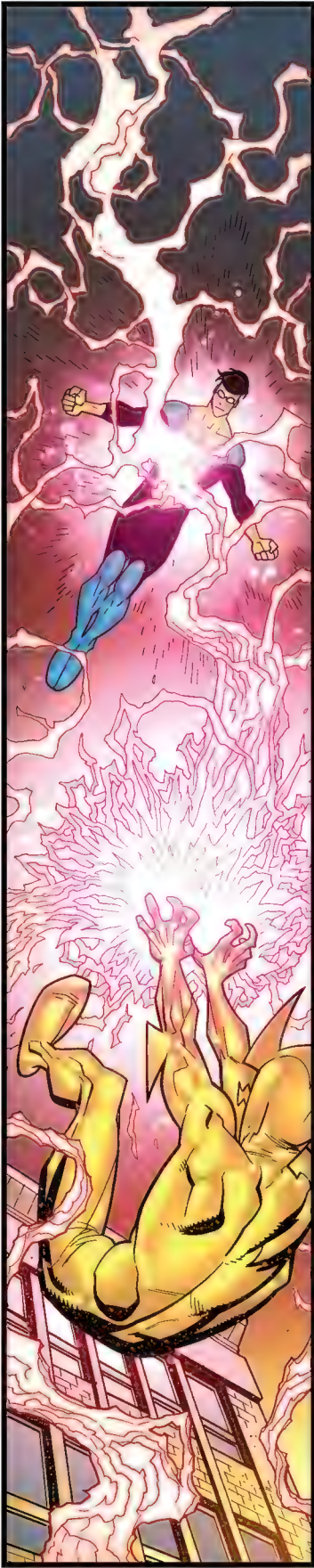


IS THAT THE--?

YEAH, IT'S THE "YOU NEED TO GO FIGHT SOMEONE" HOTLINE.

DUTY CALLS.

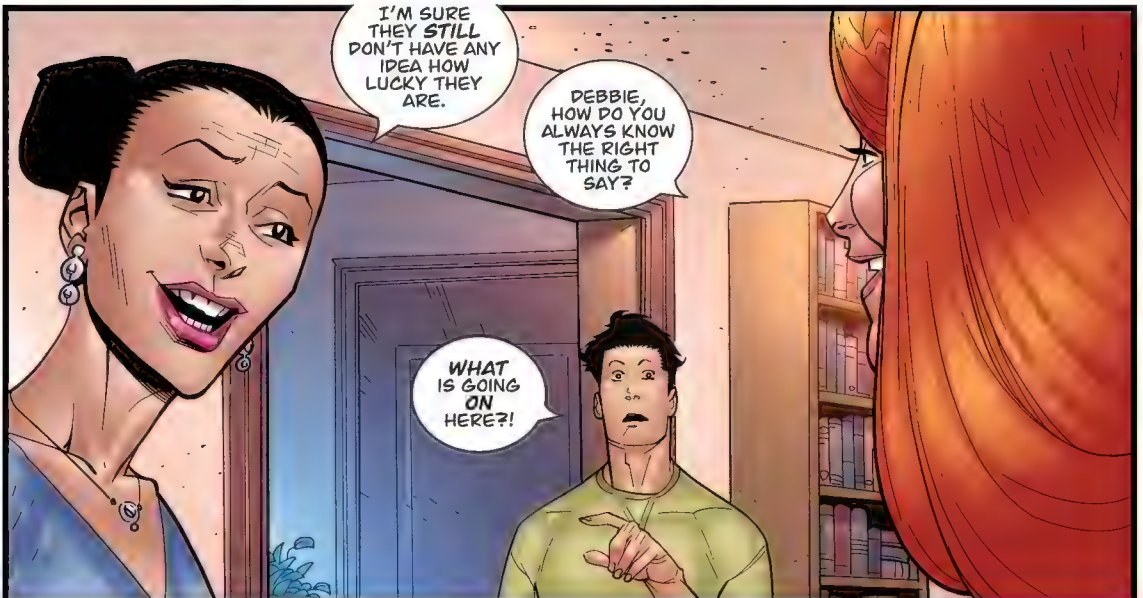
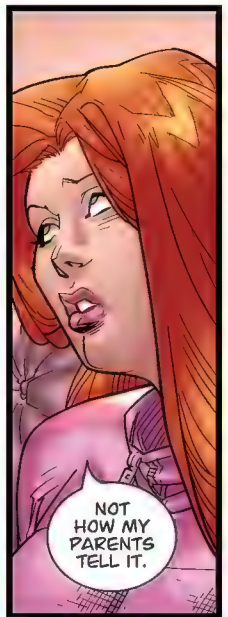
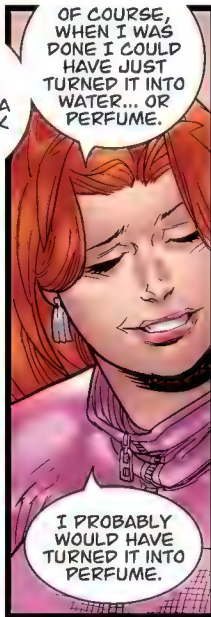
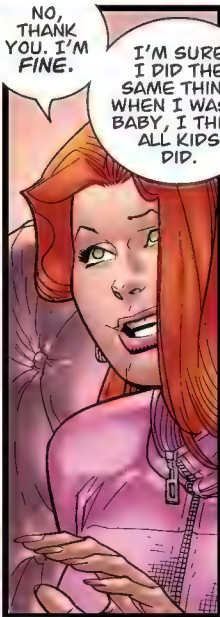
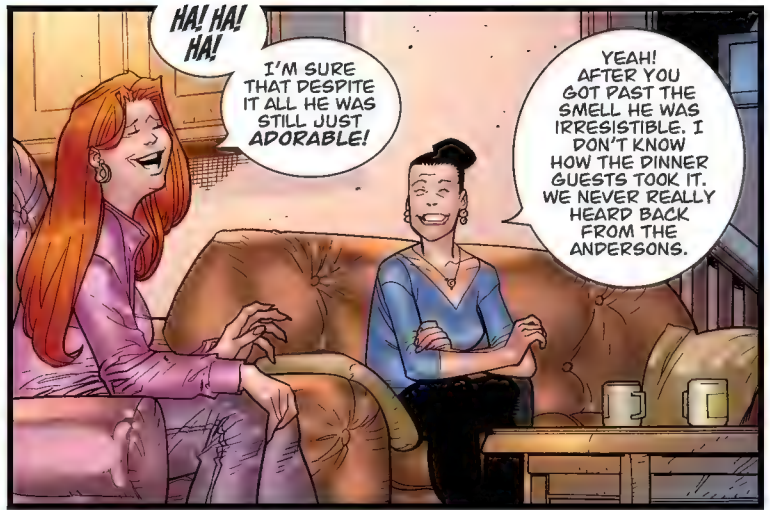














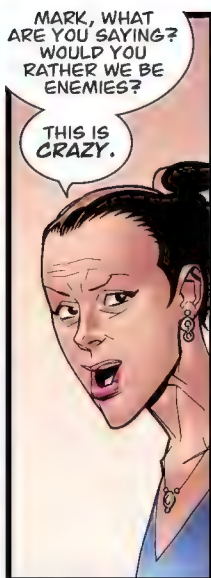


I KNEW YOU WERE TAKING CARE OF THAT BANK THING TONIGHT AND I DIDN'T HAVE ANY PLANS SO I POPPED OVER TO SEE YOUR MOM.

ARE YOU SERIOUS?

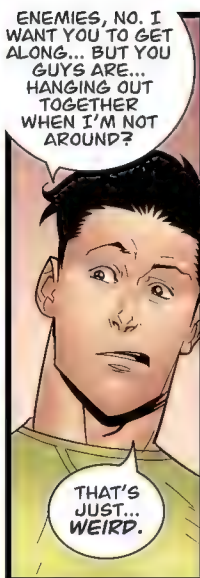


SO YOU'RE FRIENDS WITH MY MOM?



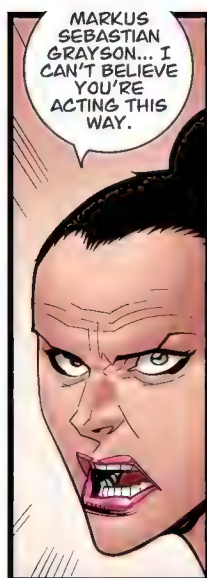
MARK, WHAT ARE YOU SAYING? WOULD YOU RATHER WE BE ENEMIES?

THIS IS CRAZY.

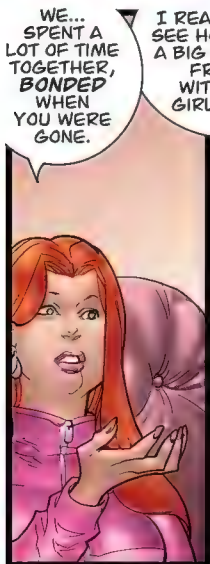


ENEMIES, NO. I WANT YOU TO GET ALONG... BUT YOU GUYS ARE... HANGING OUT TOGETHER WHEN I'M NOT AROUND?

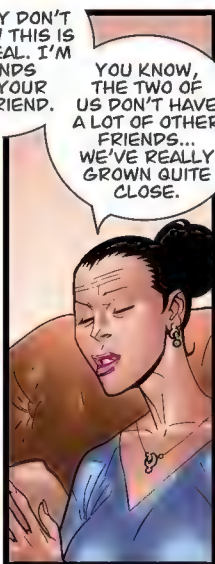
THAT'S JUST... WEIRD.



MARKUS SEBASTIAN GRAYSON... I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU'RE ACTING THIS WAY.



WE... SPENT A LOT OF TIME TOGETHER, BONDED, WHEN YOU WERE GONE.



I REALLY DON'T SEE HOW THIS IS A BIG DEAL. I'M FRIENDS WITH YOUR GIRLFRIEND.

YOU KNOW, THE TWO OF US DON'T HAVE A LOT OF OTHER FRIENDS... WE'VE REALLY GROWN QUITE CLOSE.

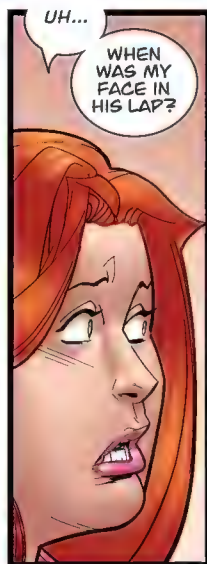


YOU'RE MAKING IT WORSE.



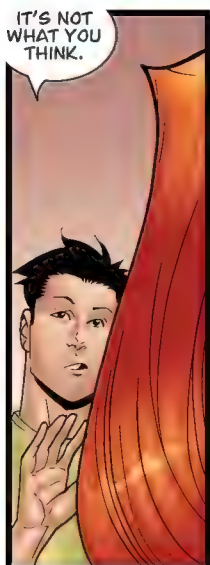
REALLY, MARK. YOU'RE BOTH ADULTS NOW. YOU TURNED TWENTY WHILE YOU WERE AWAY.

YOU REALLY WANT ME SCOLDING YOU WHEN I SEE HER FACE IN YOUR LAP WHEN YOU'RE FORTY?

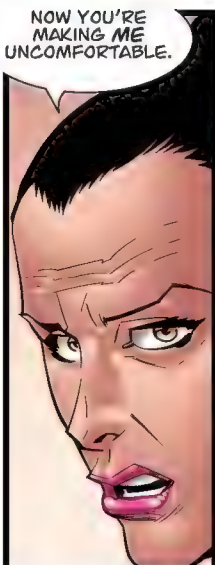


UH...

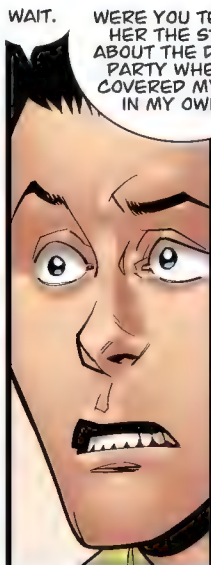
WHEN WAS MY FACE IN HIS LAP?



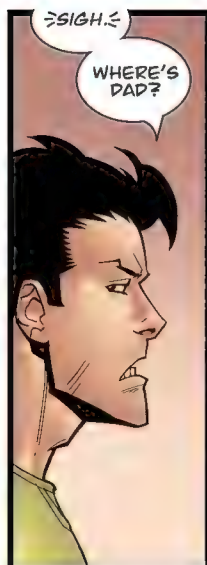
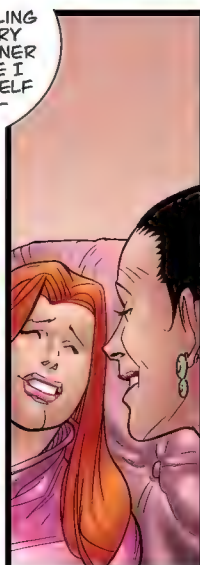
IT'S NOT WHAT YOU THINK.



NOW YOU'RE MAKING ME UNCOMFORTABLE.



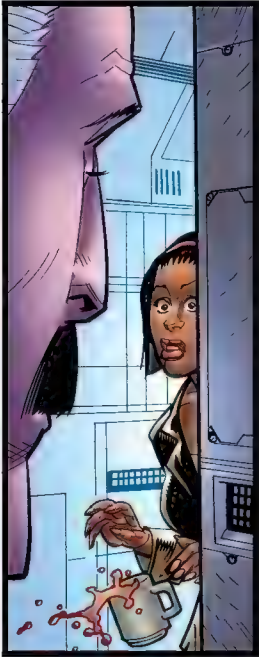
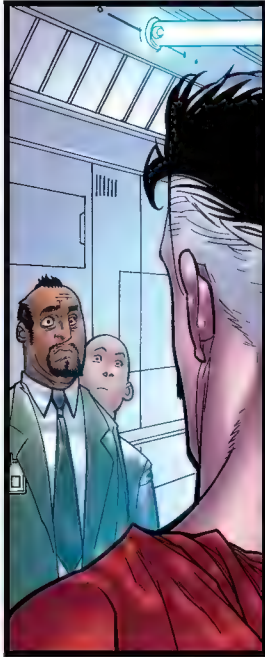
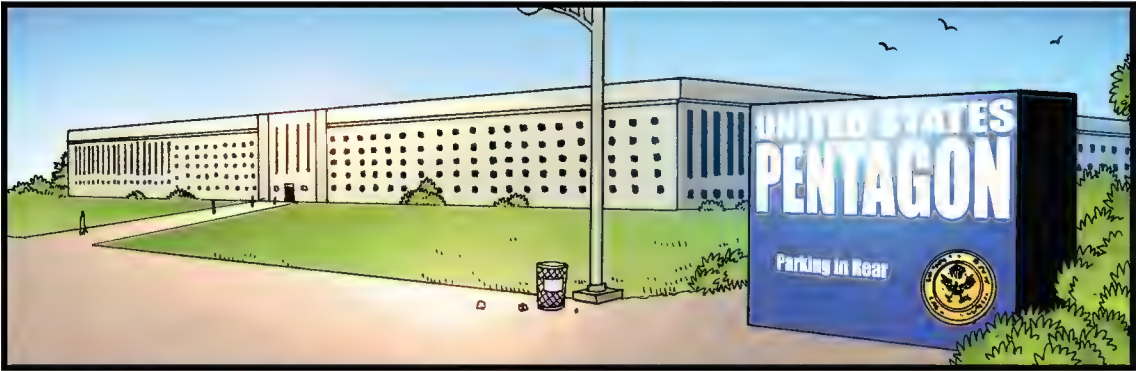
WAIT. WERE YOU TELLING HER THE STORY ABOUT THE DINNER PARTY WHERE I COVERED MYSELF IN MY OWN--



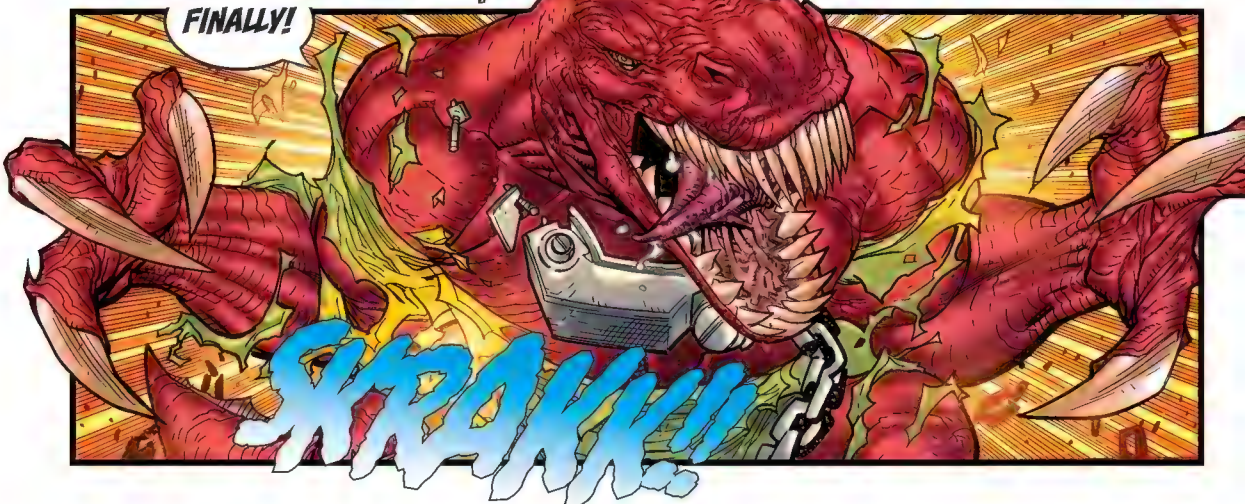
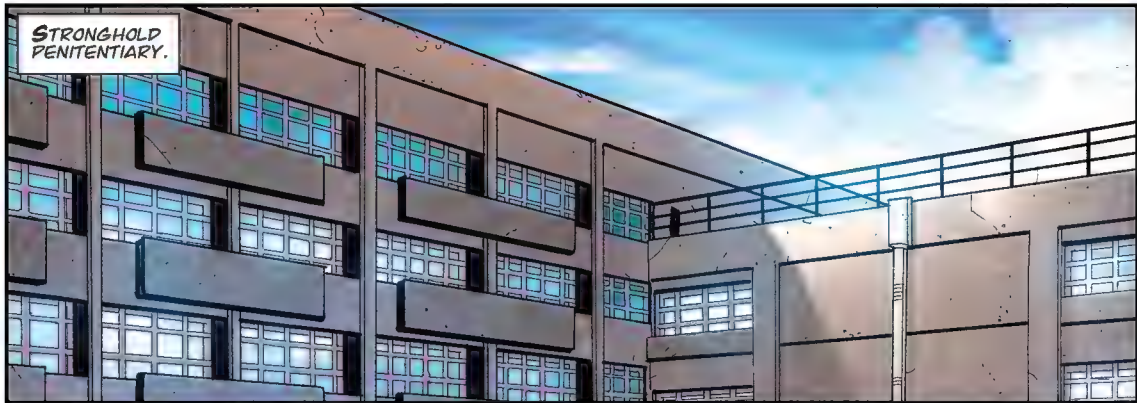
==SIGH==

WHERE'S DAD?

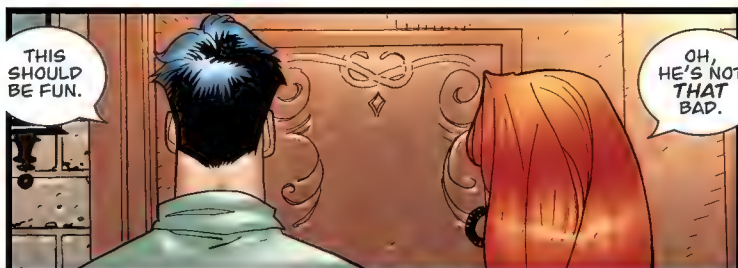








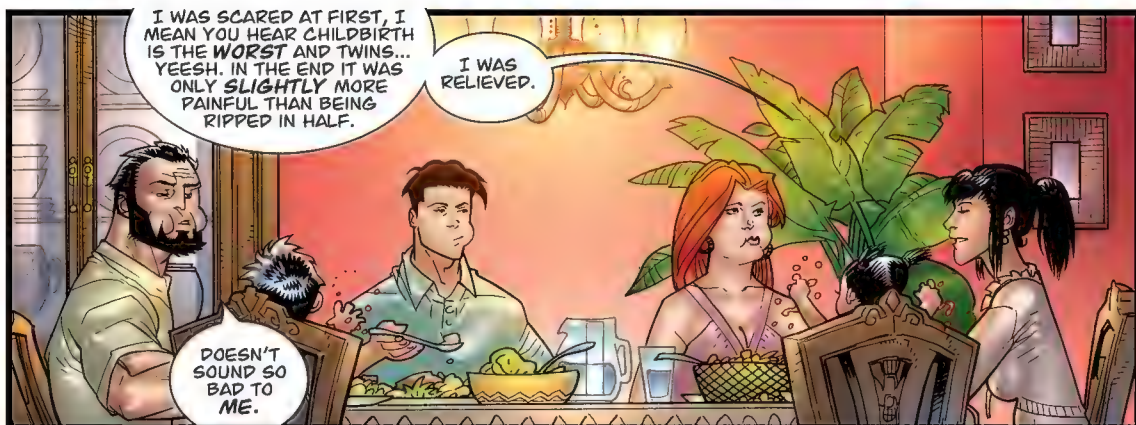








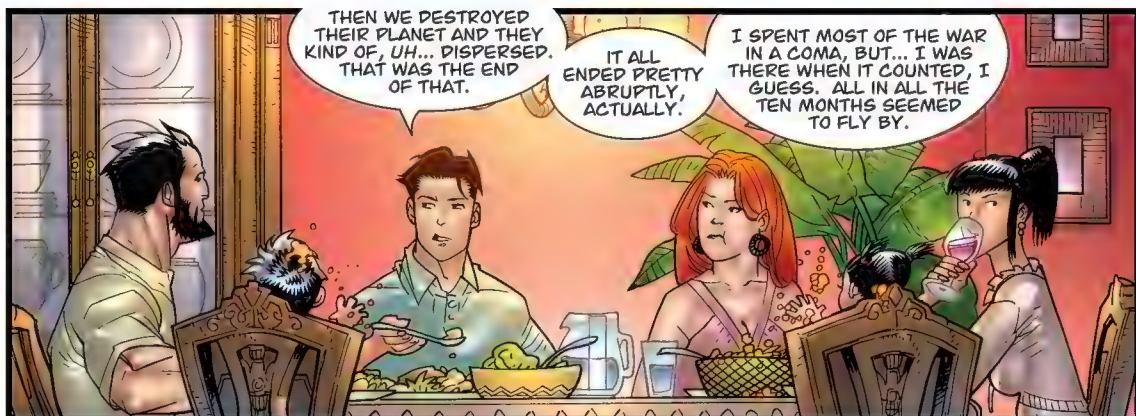




I WAS SCARED AT FIRST, I MEAN YOU HEAR CHILDBIRTH IS THE WORST AND TWINS... YEEESH. IN THE END IT WAS ONLY SLIGHTLY MORE PAINFUL THAN BEING RIPPED IN HALF.

I WAS RELIEVED.

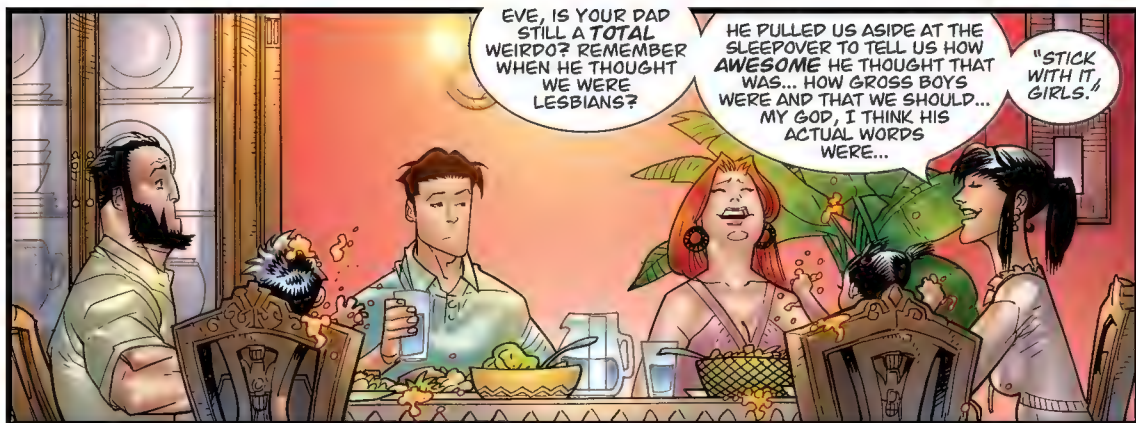
DOESN'T SOUND SO BAD TO ME.



THEN WE DESTROYED THEIR PLANET AND THEY KIND OF, UH... DISPERSED. THAT WAS THE END OF THAT.

IT ALL ENDED PRETTY ABRUPTLY, ACTUALLY.

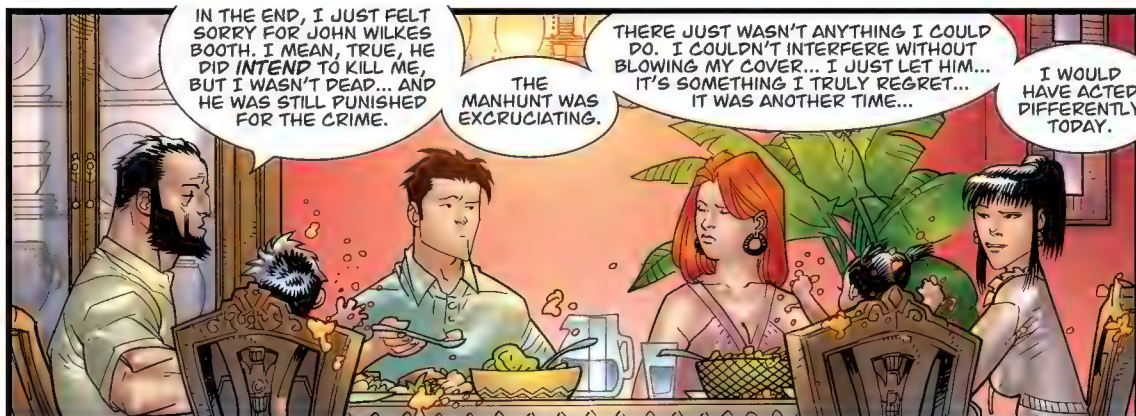
I SPENT MOST OF THE WAR IN A COMA, BUT... I WAS THERE WHEN IT COUNTED, I GUESS. ALL IN ALL THE TEN MONTHS SEEMED TO FLY BY.



EVE, IS YOUR DAD STILL A TOTAL WEIRDO? REMEMBER WHEN HE THOUGHT WE WERE LESBIANS?

HE PULLED US ASIDE AT THE SLEEPOVER TO TELL US HOW AWESOME HE THOUGHT THAT WAS... HOW GROSS BOYS WERE AND THAT WE SHOULD... MY GOD, I THINK HIS ACTUAL WORDS WERE...

"STICK WITH IT, GIRLS."



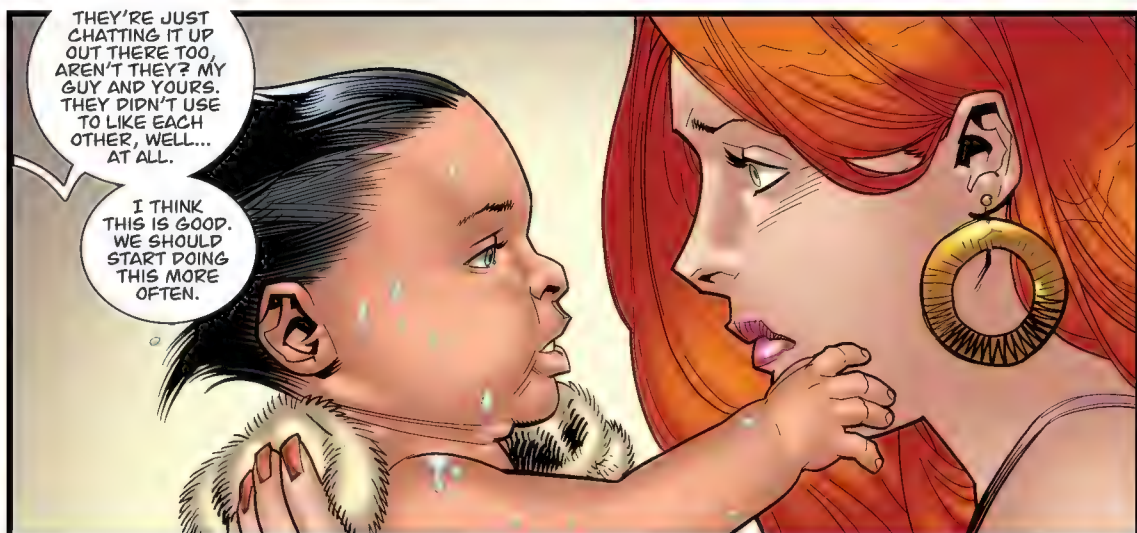
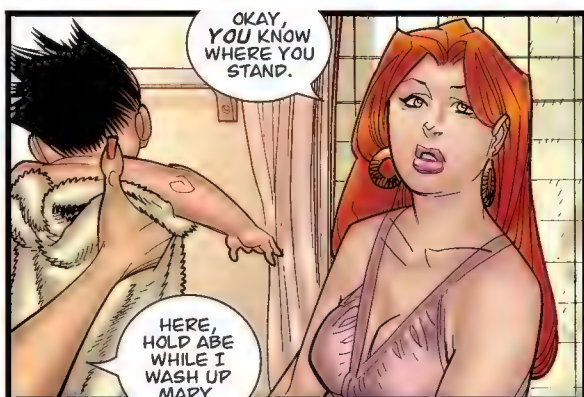
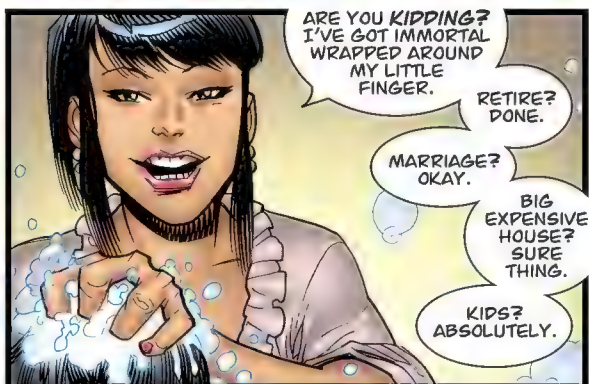
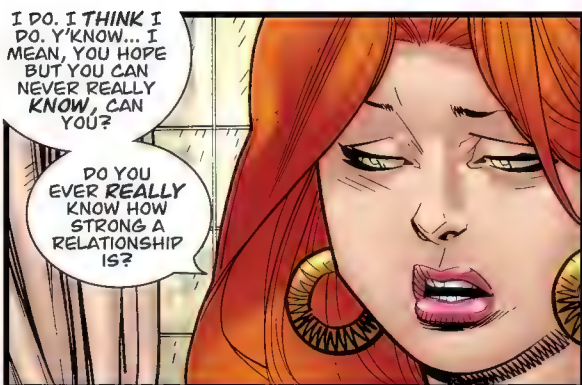
IN THE END, I JUST FELT SORRY FOR JOHN WILKES BOOTH. I MEAN, TRUE, HE DID INTEND TO KILL ME, BUT I WASN'T DEAD... AND HE WAS STILL PUNISHED FOR THE CRIME.

THE MANHUNT WAS EXCRUCIATING.

THERE JUST WASN'T ANYTHING I COULD DO. I COULDN'T INTERFERE WITHOUT BLOWING MY COVER... I JUST LET HIM... IT'S SOMETHING I TRULY REGRET... IT WAS ANOTHER TIME...

I WOULD HAVE ACTED DIFFERENTLY TODAY.







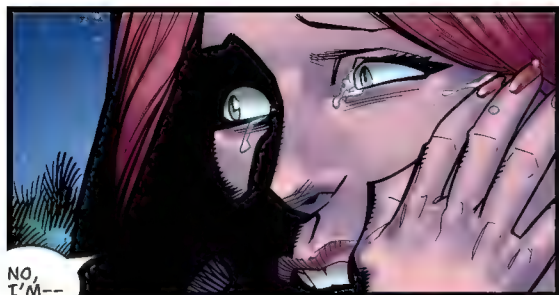




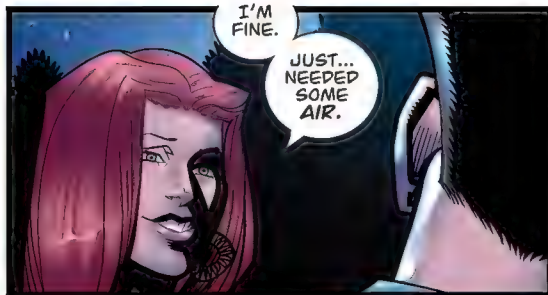


EVE?

WHAT  
HAPPENED?  
KATE SAID YOU  
WERE CRYING,  
ARE YOU  
UPSET ABOUT  
SOMETHING?



NO,  
I'M--



I'M  
FINE.

JUST...  
NEEDED  
SOME  
AIR.



EVE.

WHAT'S  
WRONG?



MARK,  
I--

EVE,  
SERIOUSLY...  
WHAT  
HAPPENED IN  
THERE?

DID KATE SAY  
SOMETHING?

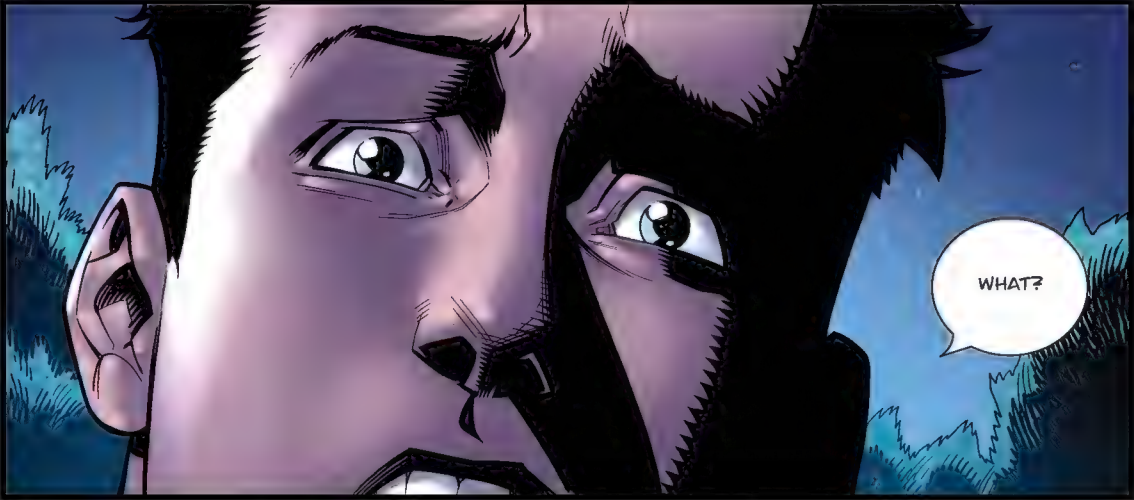
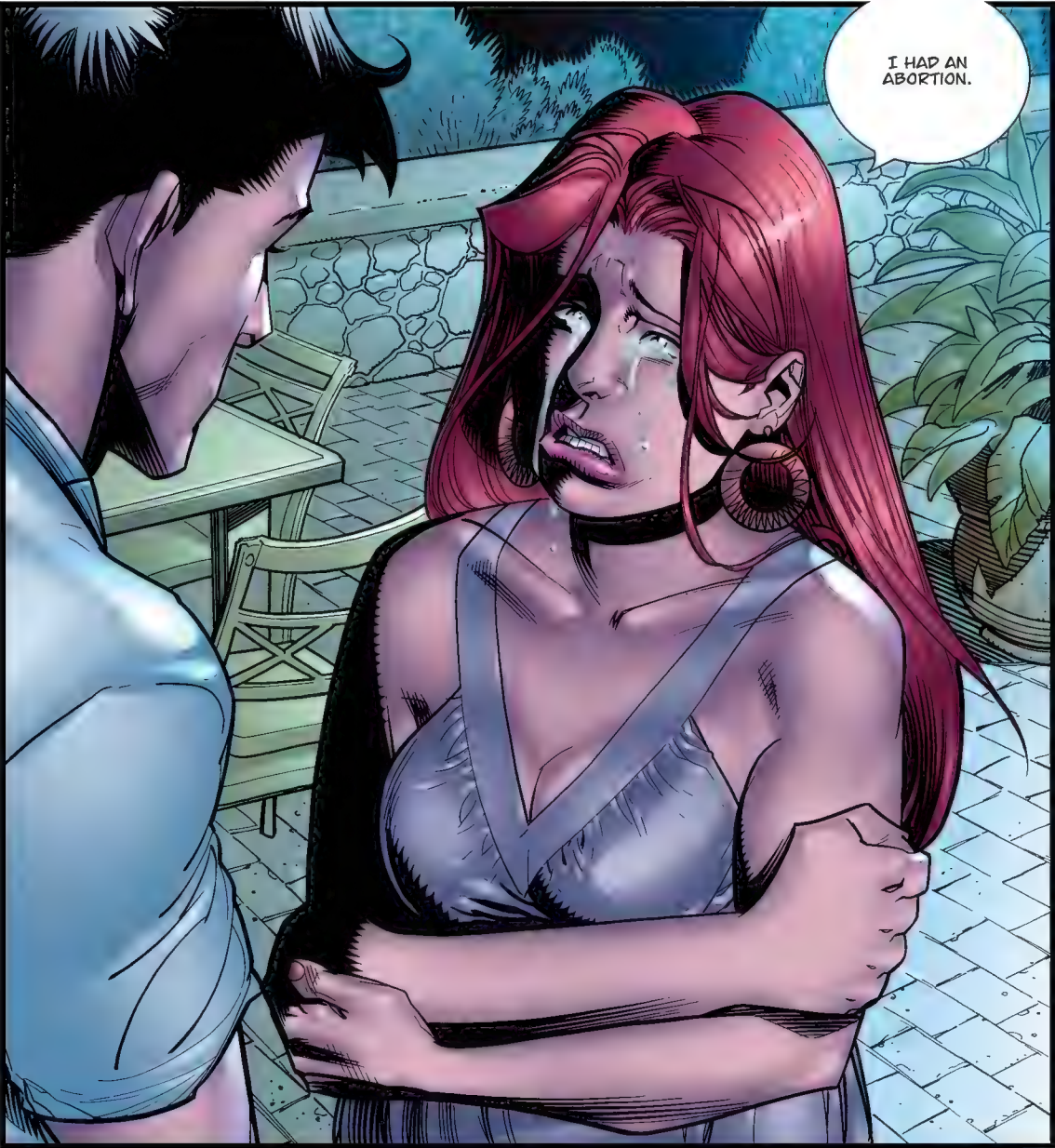


NO,  
JUST  
LISTEN,  
IT'S--

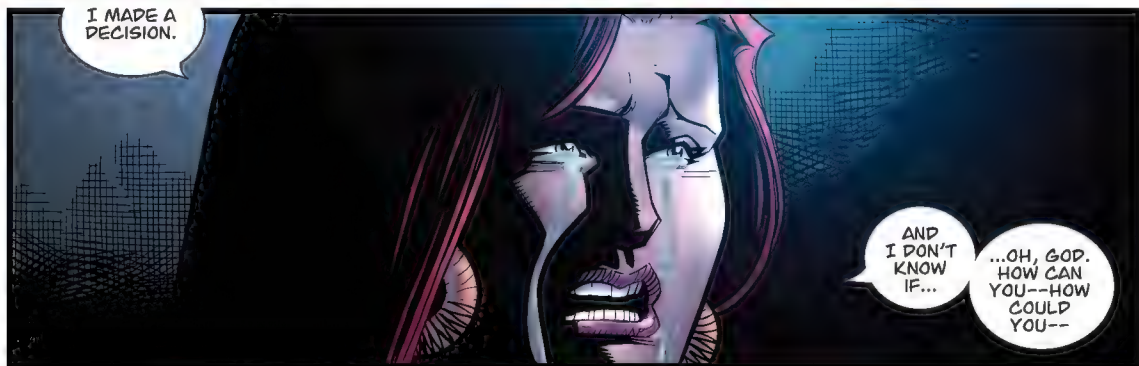
OH,  
GOD...









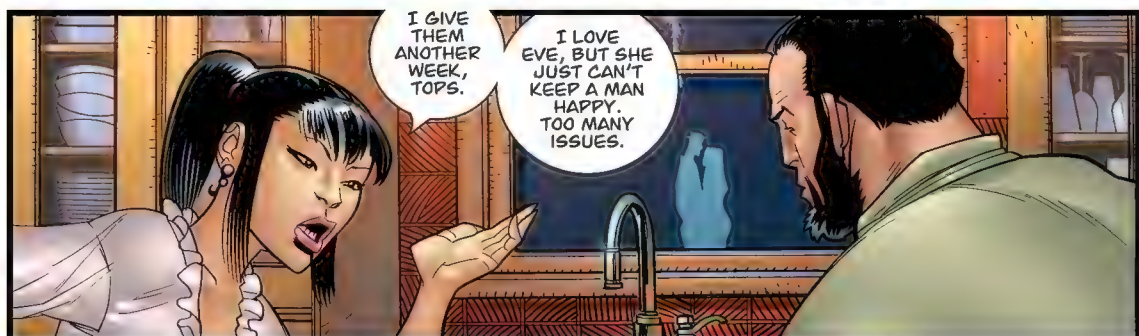
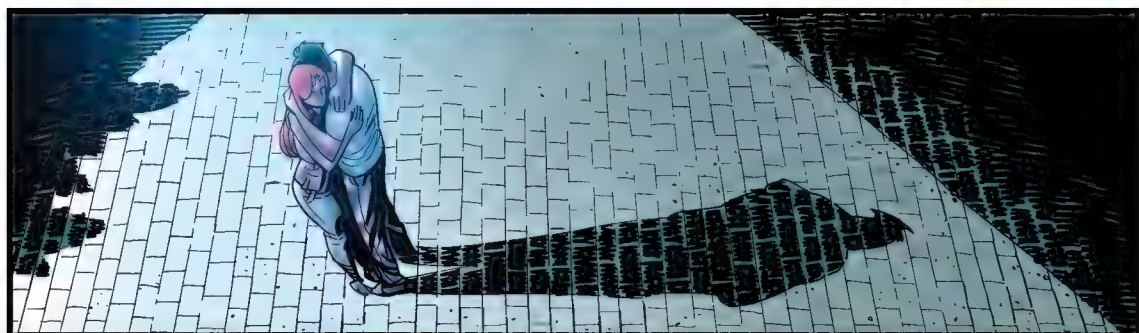
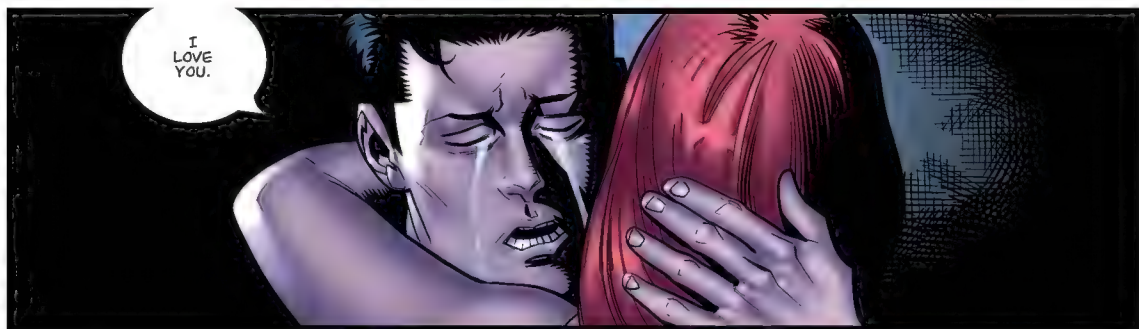




I'M  
SORRY  
I DID THIS  
TO YOU.















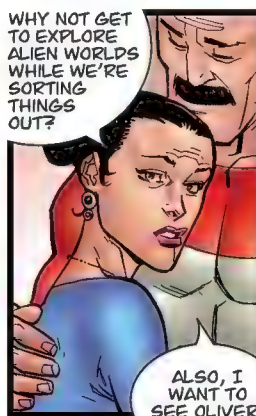
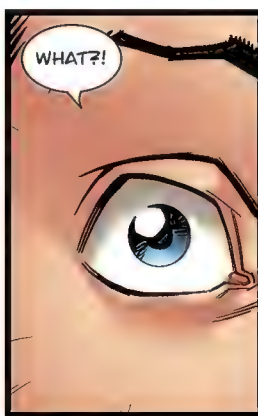
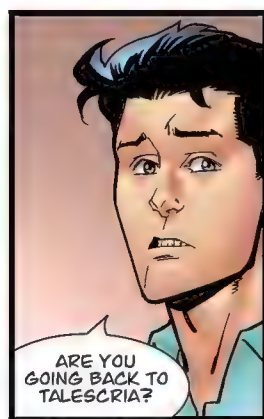
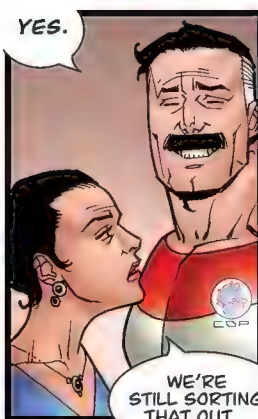
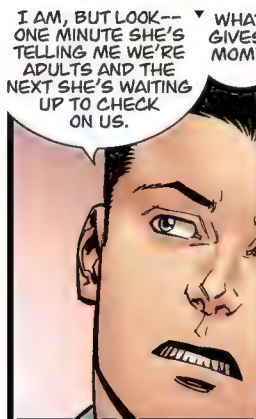
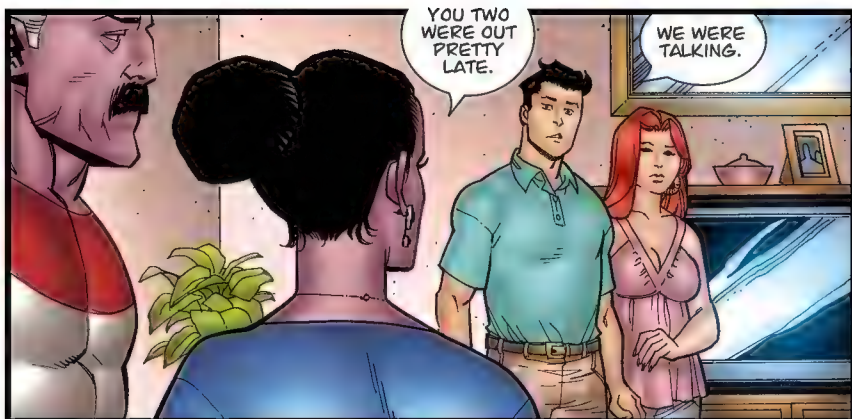


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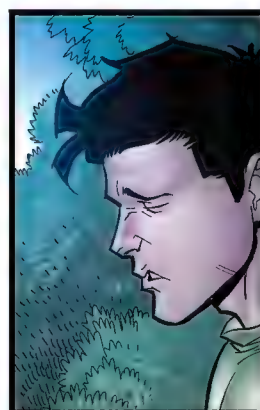
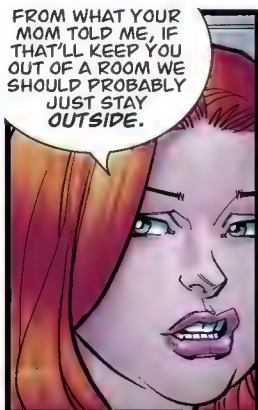
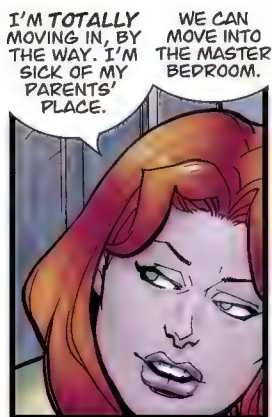
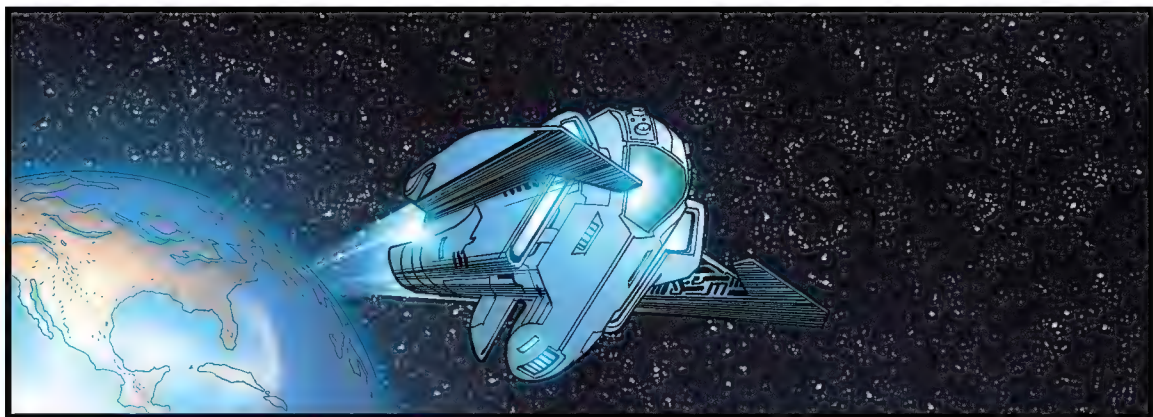


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80

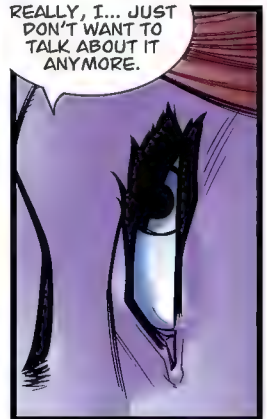
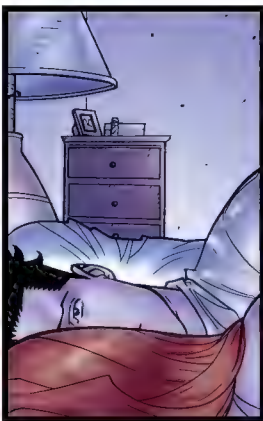
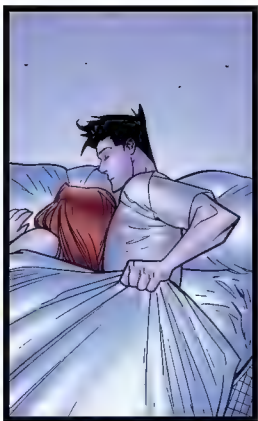
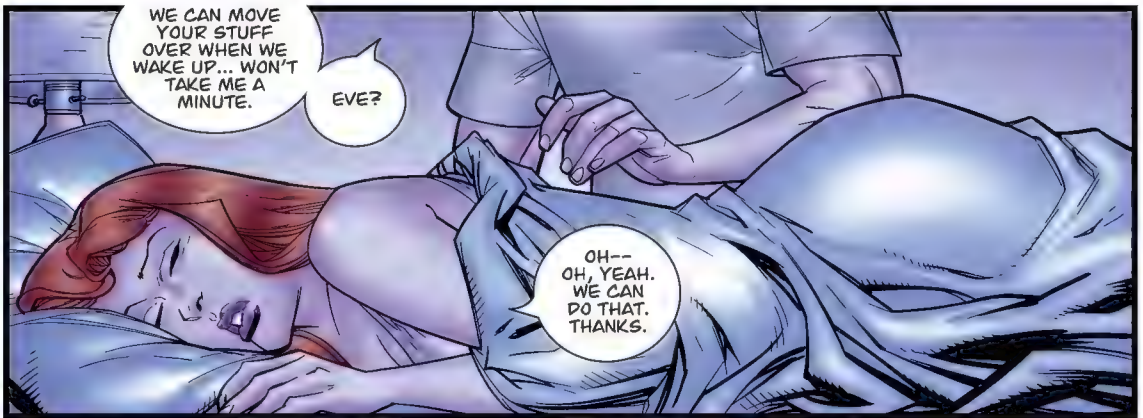
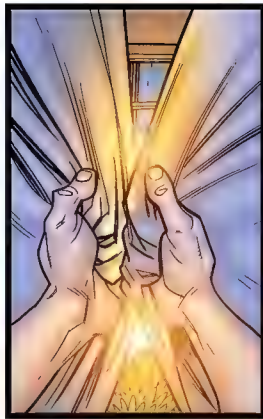














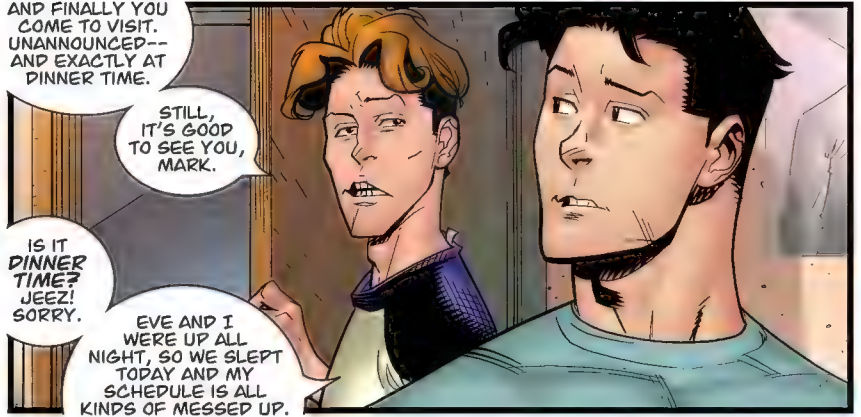


AND FINALLY YOU  
COME TO VISIT.  
UNANNOUNCED--  
AND EXACTLY AT  
DINNER TIME.

STILL,  
IT'S GOOD  
TO SEE YOU,  
MARK.

IS IT  
DINNER  
TIME?  
JEEZ!  
SORRY.

EVE AND I  
WERE UP ALL  
NIGHT, SO WE SLEPT  
TODAY AND MY  
SCHEDULE IS ALL  
KINDS OF MESSED UP.



UP ALL  
NIGHT,  
HUH?

I GUESS  
YOU TWO  
ARE GETTING  
REACQUAINTED,  
THEN.



OH, HOW  
I'VE MISSED  
OUR LITTLE  
TALKS,  
WILLIAM.

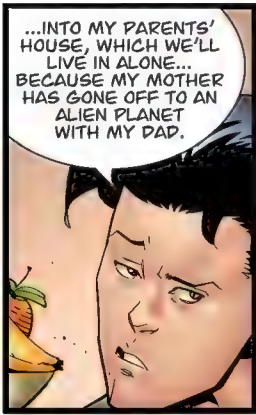


YEAH,  
SORRY...  
I COULDN'T  
RESIST.

WHAT  
BRINGS  
YOU  
HERE?



SHE'S  
MOVING IN  
WITH ME,  
BY THE  
WAY...



...INTO MY PARENTS'  
HOUSE, WHICH WE'LL  
LIVE IN ALONE...  
BECAUSE MY MOTHER  
HAS GONE OFF TO AN  
ALIEN PLANET  
WITH MY DAD.



BEING YOUR  
FRIEND IS  
LIKE, THE  
COOLEST  
THING  
EVER.

IT'S ALWAYS  
ALIEN PLANET  
THIS AND END  
OF THE WORLD  
THAT. I'VE  
REALLY  
MISSED YOU,  
MAN.

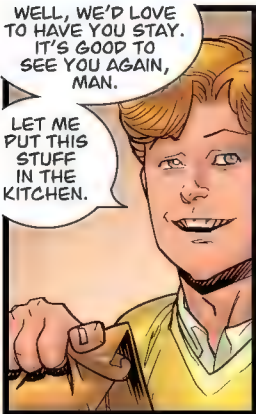


DINNER  
IS SER--

OH,  
WILLIAM--  
I DIDN'T  
KNOW WE WERE  
HAVING  
COMPANY.

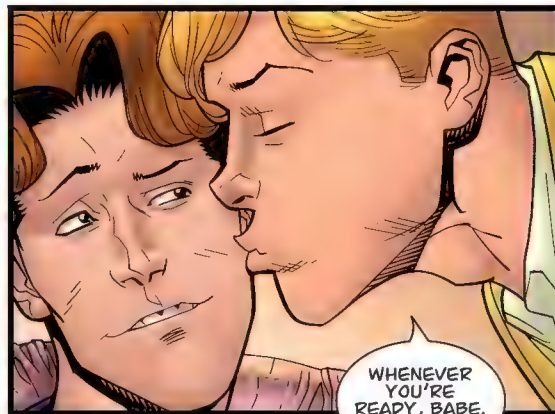


SORRY, RICK.  
I JUST POPPED  
IN FOR A MINUTE.  
I CAN'T STAY  
FOR DINNER  
ANYWAY.



WELL, WE'D LOVE  
TO HAVE YOU STAY.  
IT'S GOOD TO  
SEE YOU AGAIN,  
MAN.

LET ME  
PUT THIS  
STUFF  
IN THE  
KITCHEN.

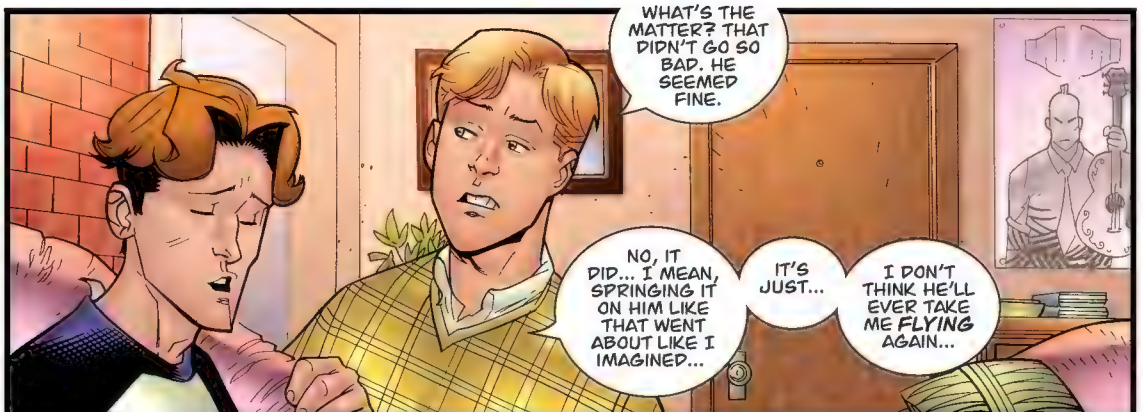
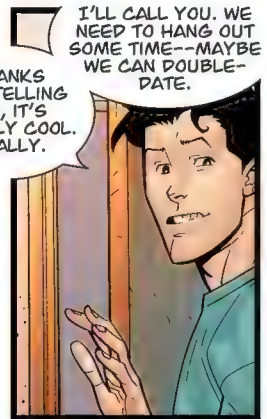
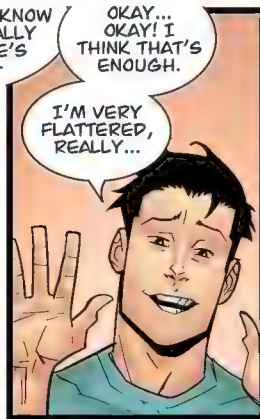
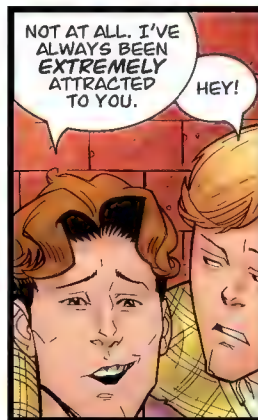
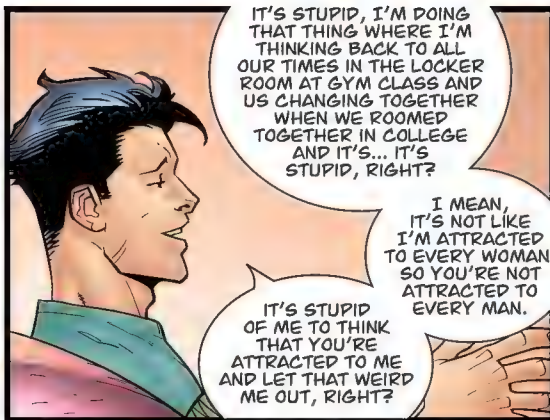
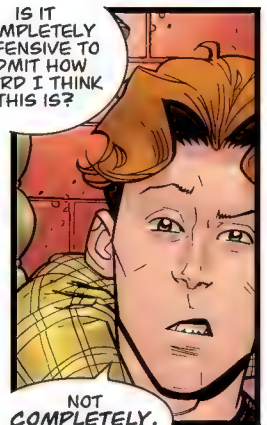
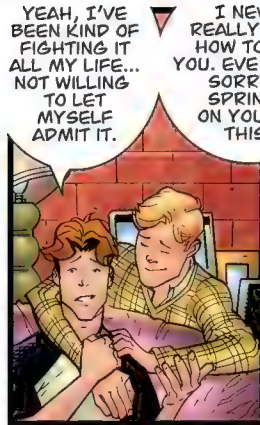


WHENEVER  
YOU'RE  
READY, BABE.

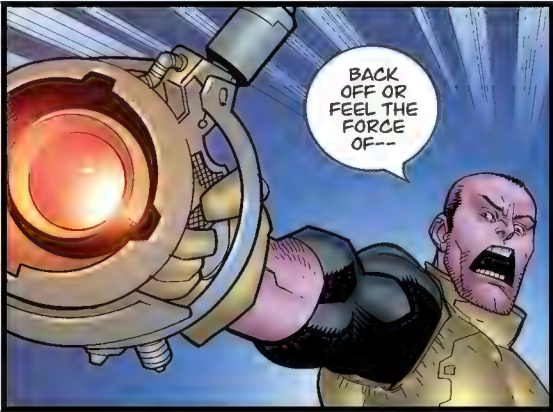


UH...  
WHAT?













I CAN'T FIGHT YOU, I DON'T STAND A CHANCE. I THOUGHT I'D RUN INTO SOMEONE LIKE REX SPODE, I COULD HANDLE THAT.

REX SPODE IS DEAD.

JEEZ, I'M SORRY, I HAD NO IDEA. I... LOOK, I SURRENDER OKAY? JUST-- PLEASE DON'T PUNCH ME OR ANYTHING.

WELL, YOU SEEM LIKE A REASONABLE GUY... SO, YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT ME PUNCHING YOU.

BUT... WHAT EXACTLY WAS THAT THING YOU POINTED AT ME?

GRAVITY GUN. IT WORKS LIKE MY BOOTS, IT DISTORTS A GRAVITATIONAL FIELD AROUND THE AREA IT FIRES INTO. THE BOOTS ALLOW ME TO ALTER GRAVITY AROUND ME ESSENTIALLY PULLING ME TOWARD THE SURFACE MY BOOTS ARE ON--THE GUN SHOOTS A BEAM OF GRAVITY THAT PROPELS THINGS IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION.

IT'S A PRETTY GOOD NON-LETHAL WEAPON-- PROBABLY WOULDN'T DO ANYTHING TO YOU, THOUGH.

PROBABLY NOT. CAN I BE HONEST WITH YOU? I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT YOU DID. YOU DID DO SOMETHING WRONG, RIGHT?

I ROBBED A BANK, I'VE GOT TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND IN BONDS HERE.

IT WAS A CINCH WITH THE BOOTS, NOBODY SAW ME-- NO ONE LOOKS UP.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO TELL ME. SO THE GETUP, NECESSARY INSIDE THE BANK, SURE--BUT OUTSIDE?

I MEAN, IF YOU'D JUST BEEN WALKING DOWN THE STREET WITH A BRIEFCASE, I PROBABLY WOULDN'T HAVE EVEN NOTICED YOU.

JUST SAYING.

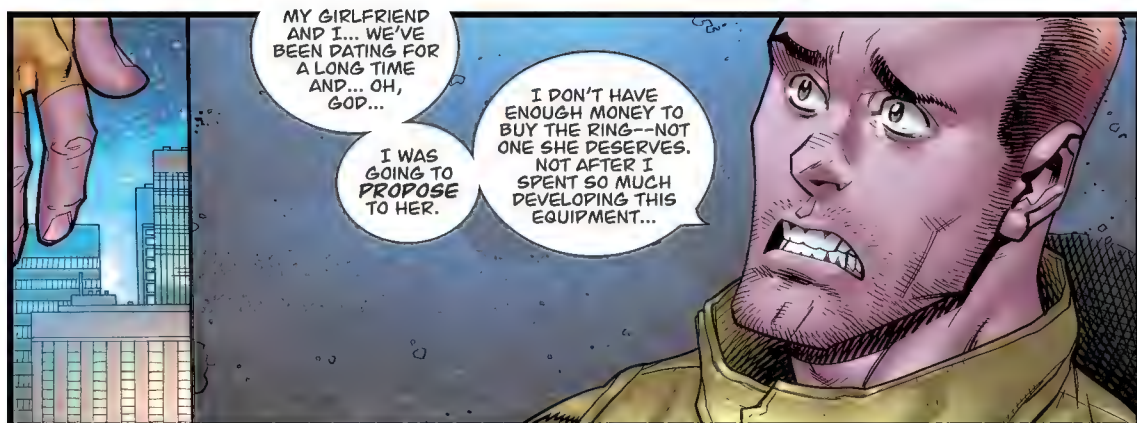
WHERE WERE YOU WHEN I WAS PLANNING THIS JOB?

THIS IS SO EMBARRASSING.

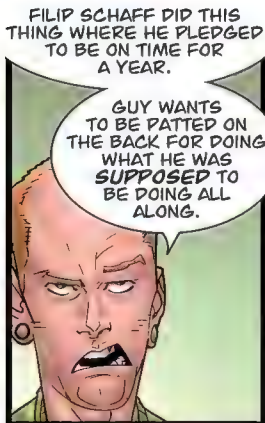
THIS IS JUST WEIRD, YOU'RE NOT EVEN FIGHTING BACK, YOU SEEM SO... REASONABLE.

WHY'D YOU DO IT? I'M CURIOUS.

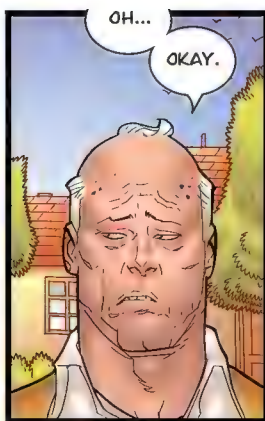
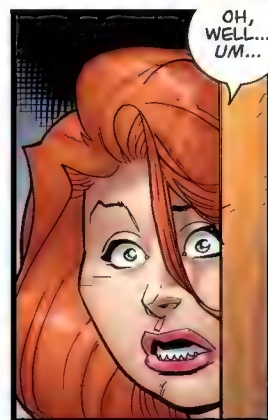
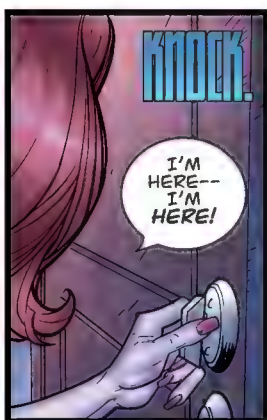
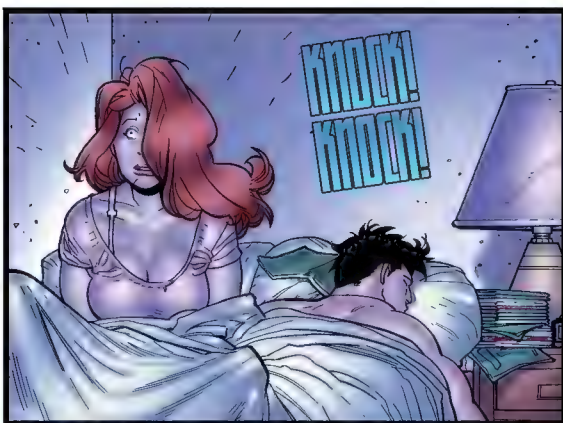




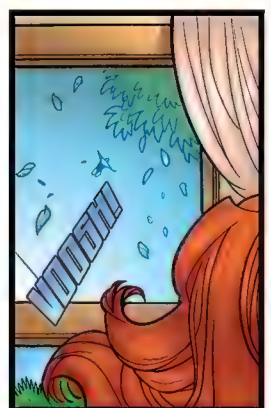
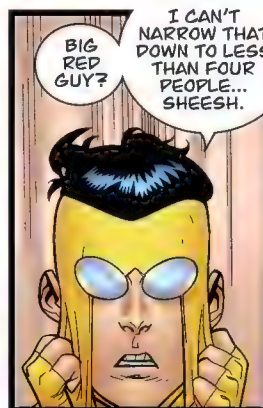
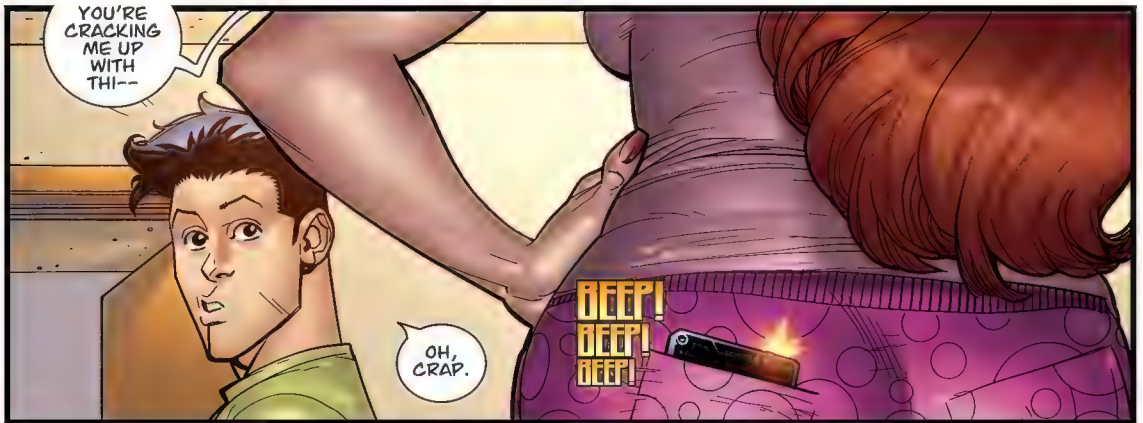
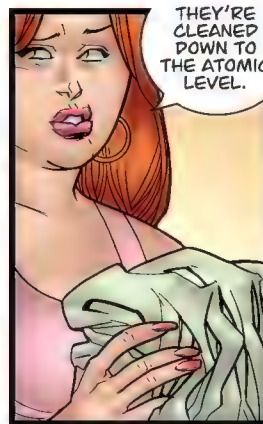
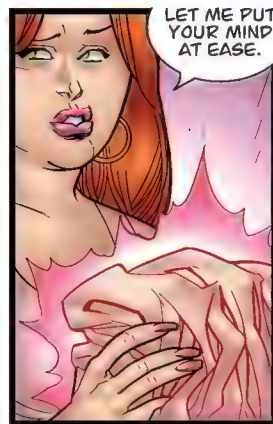
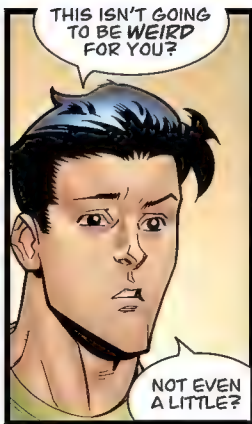




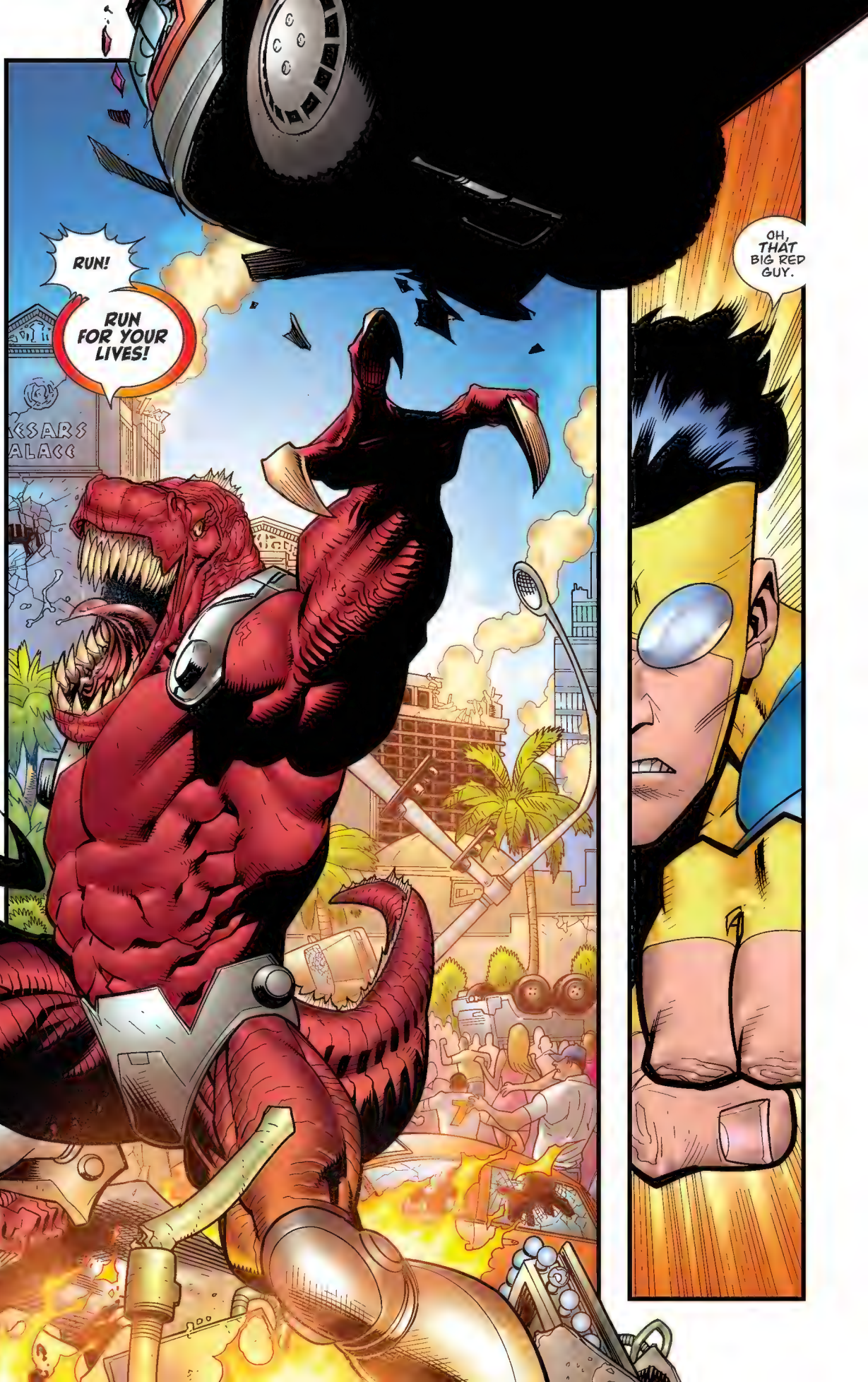










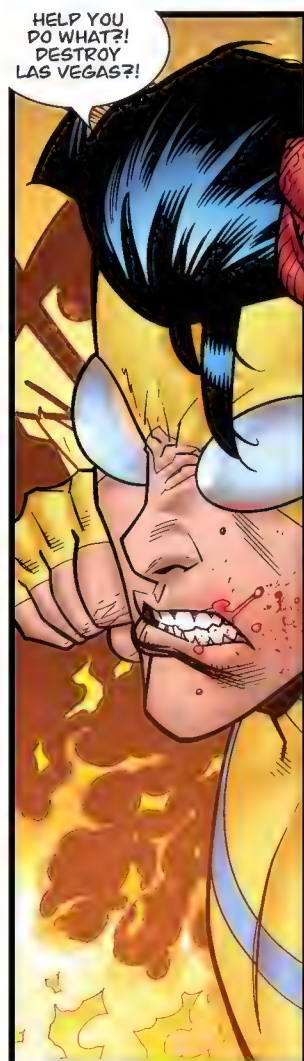


**RUN!**

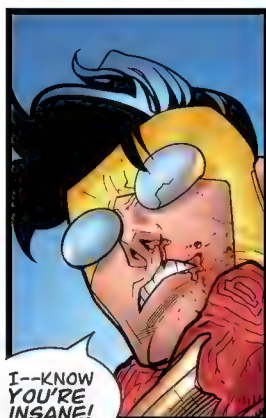
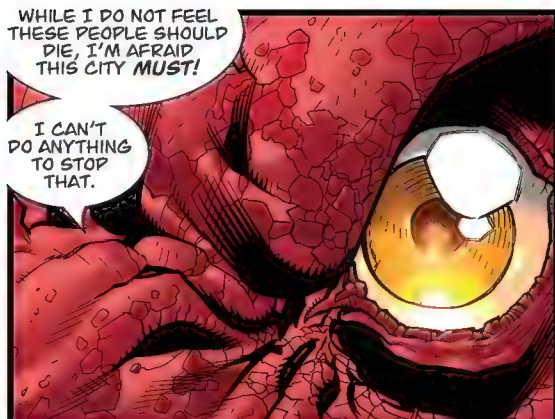
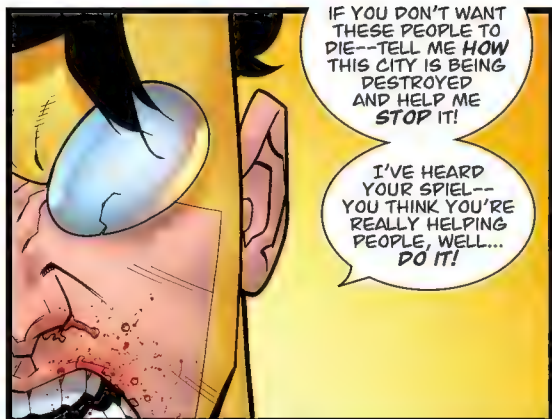
**RUN  
FOR YOUR  
LIVES!**

OH,  
THAT  
BIG RED  
GUY.

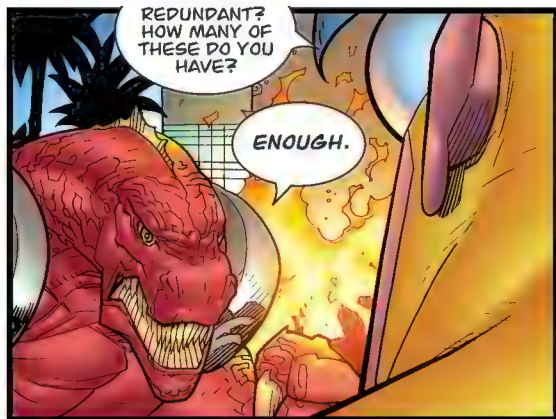
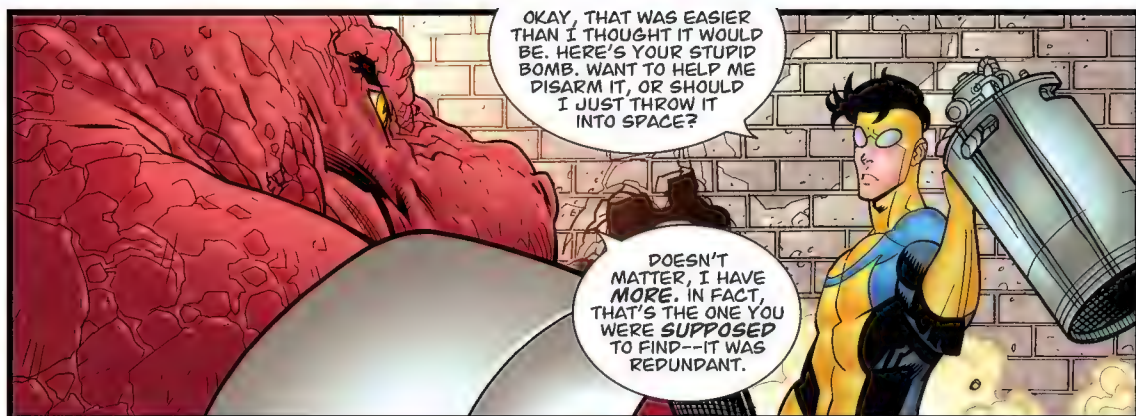
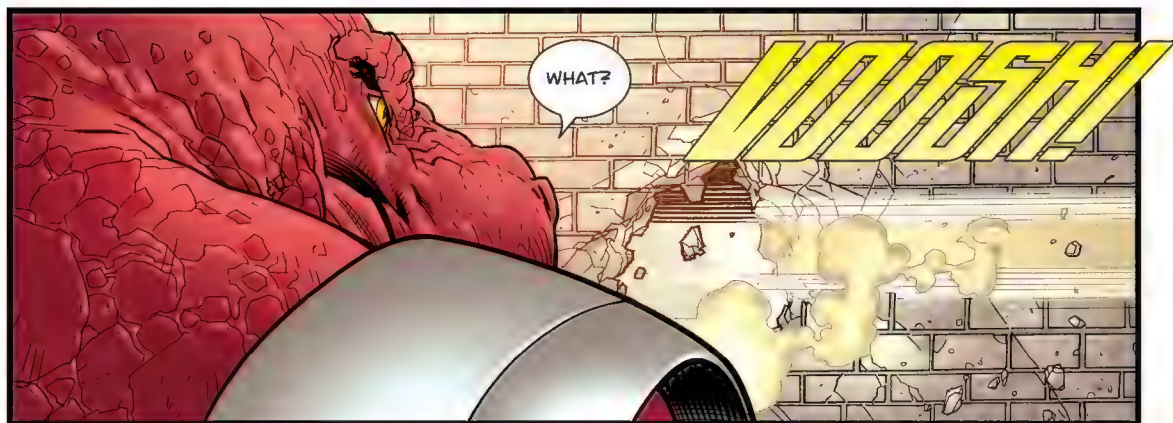








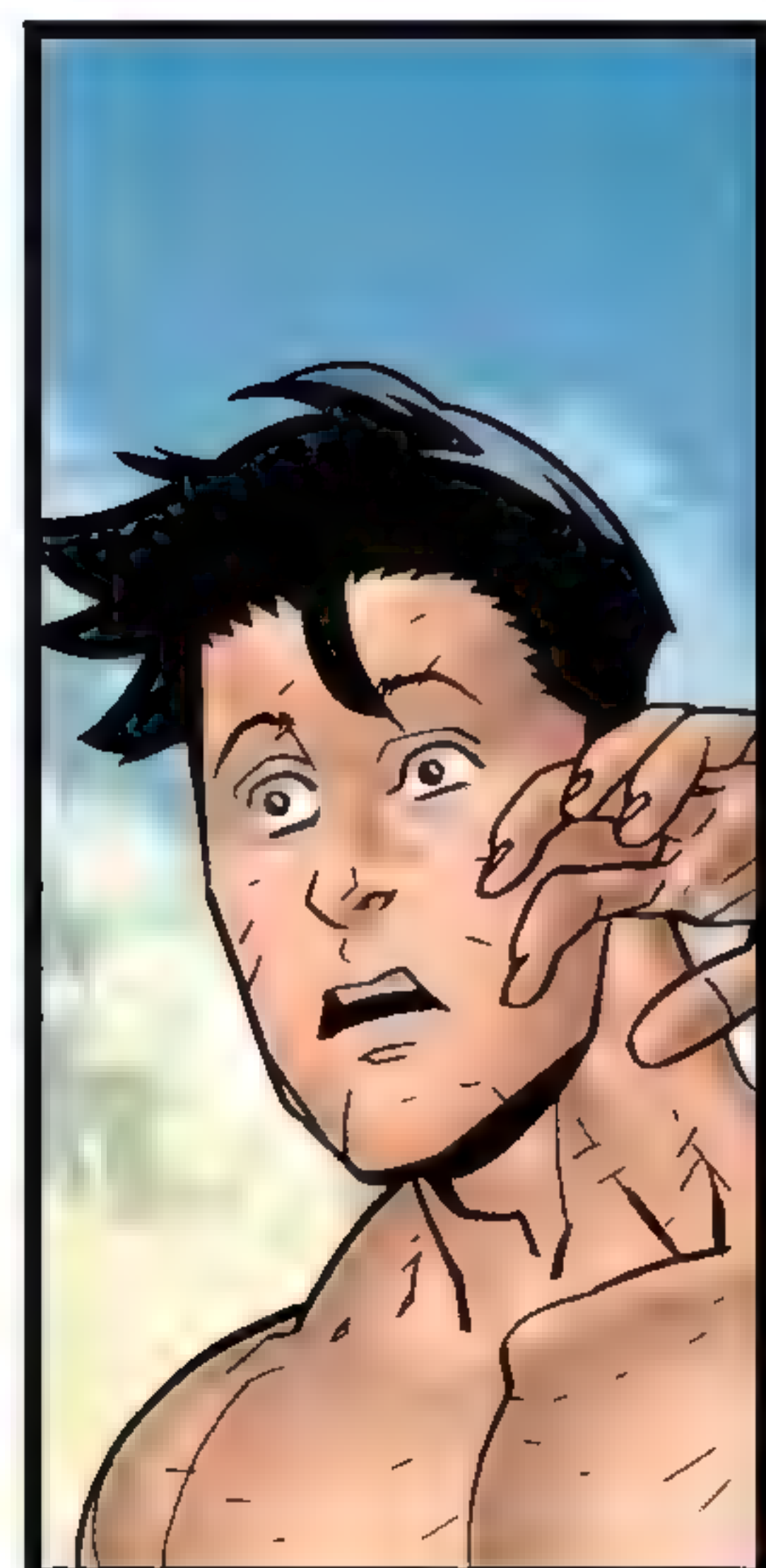
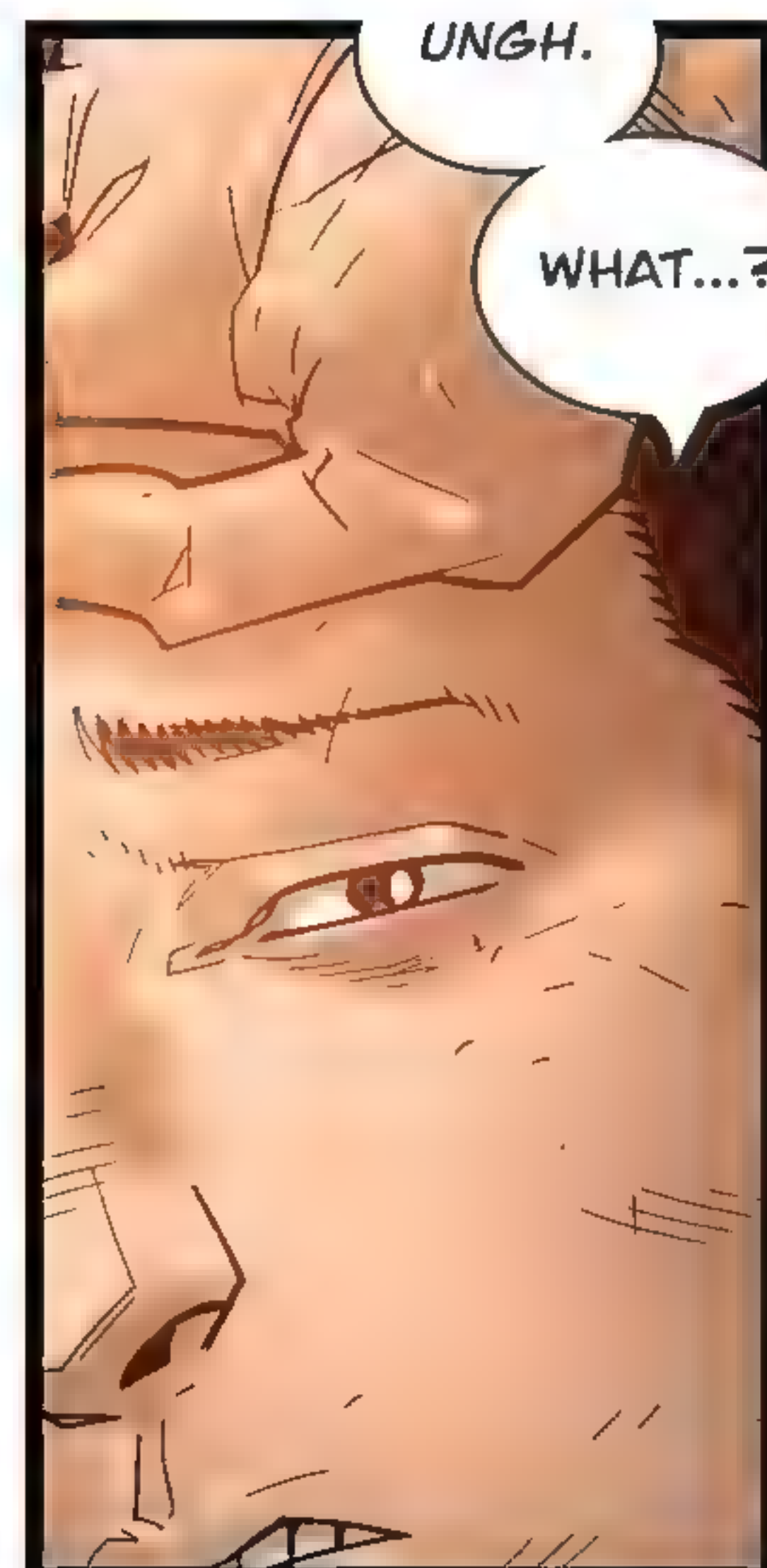
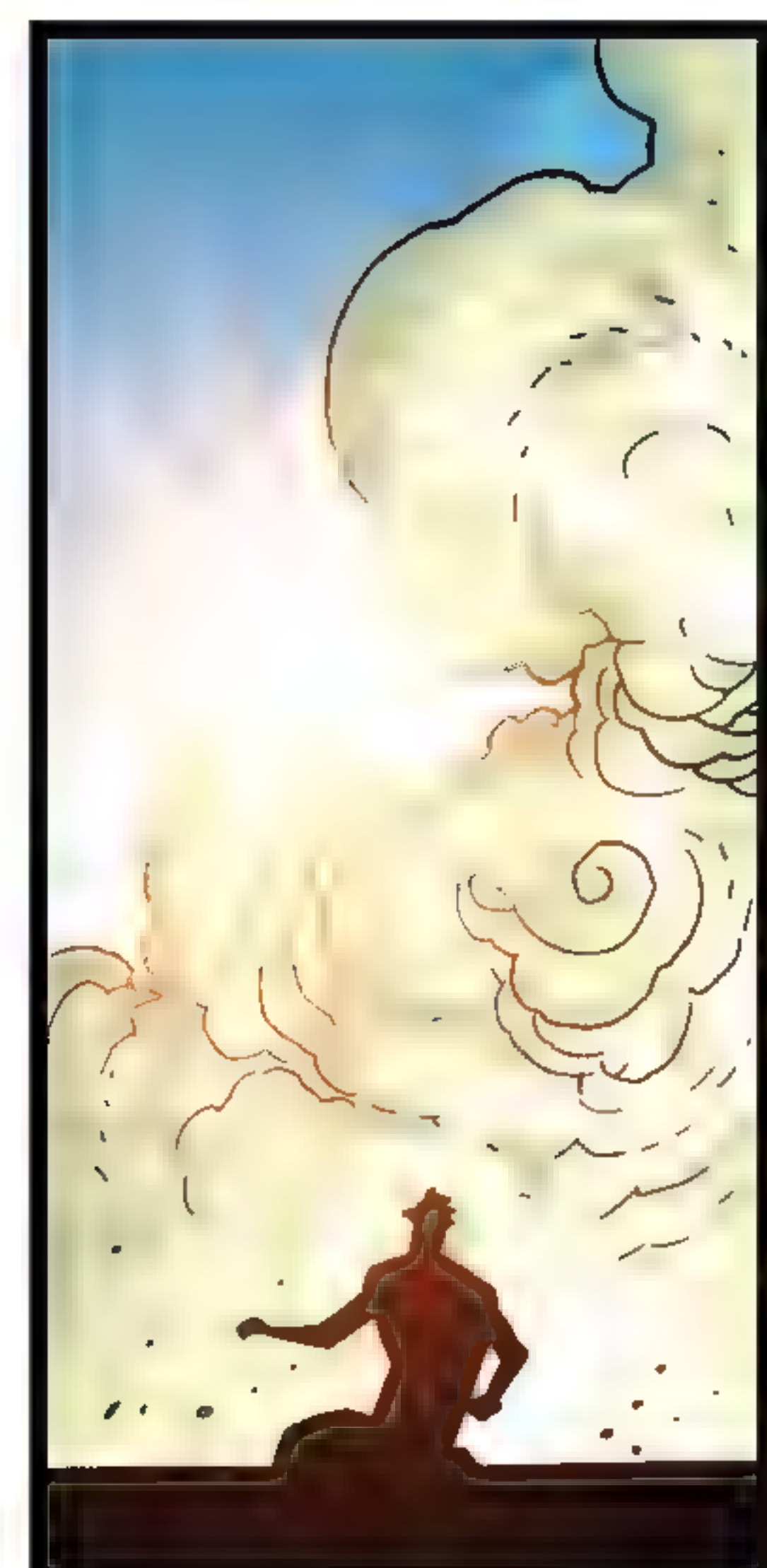
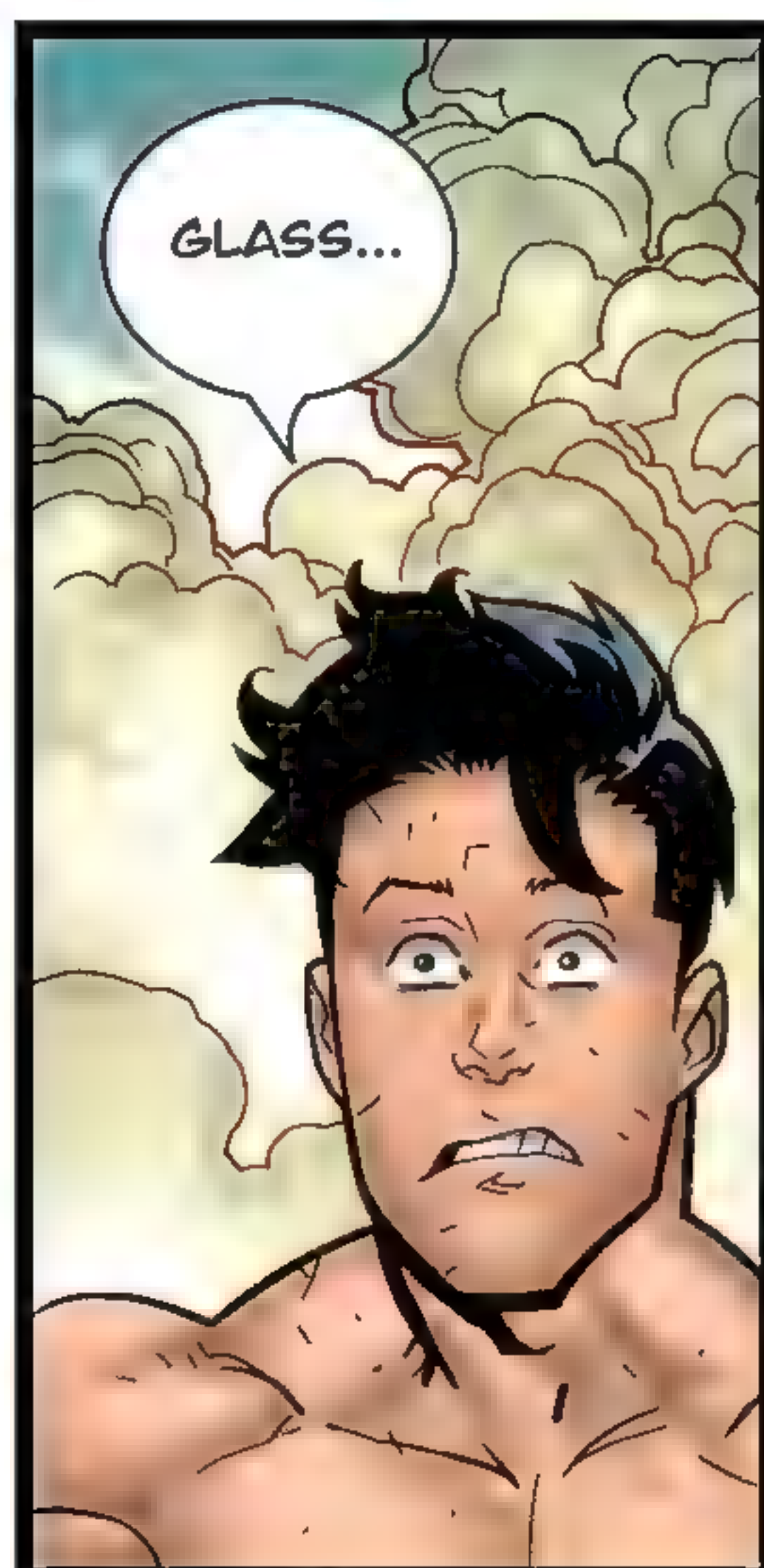
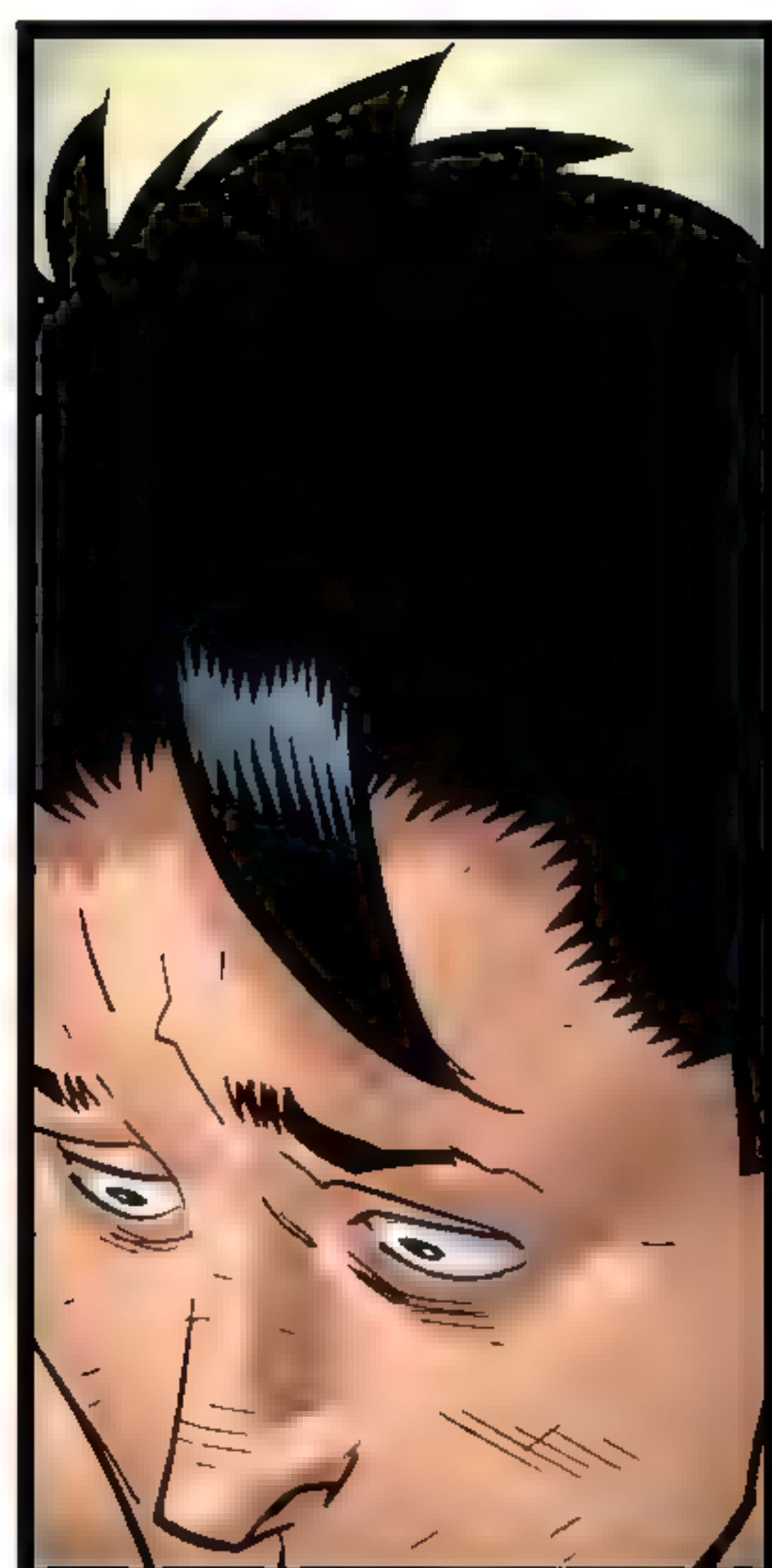
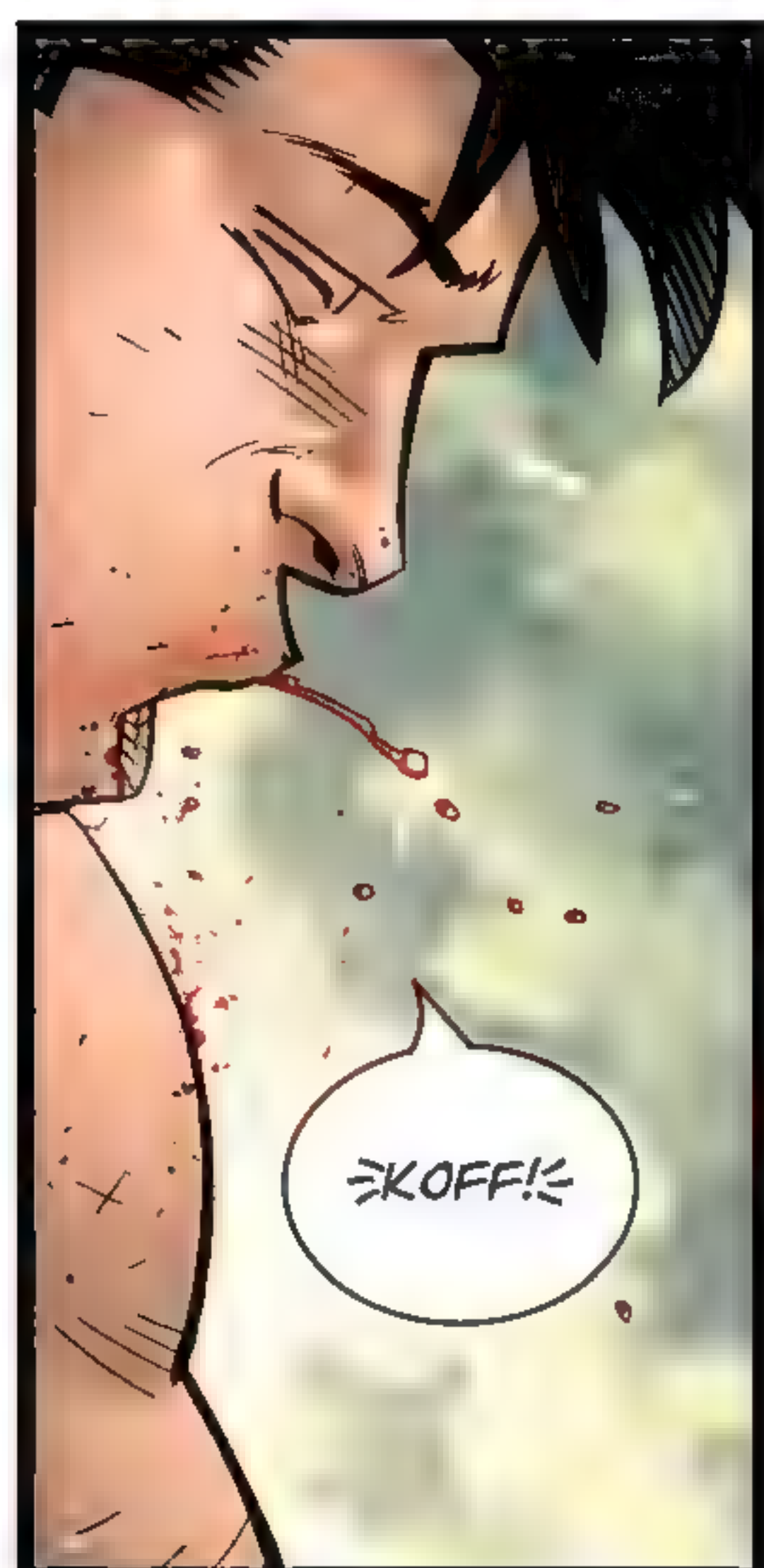




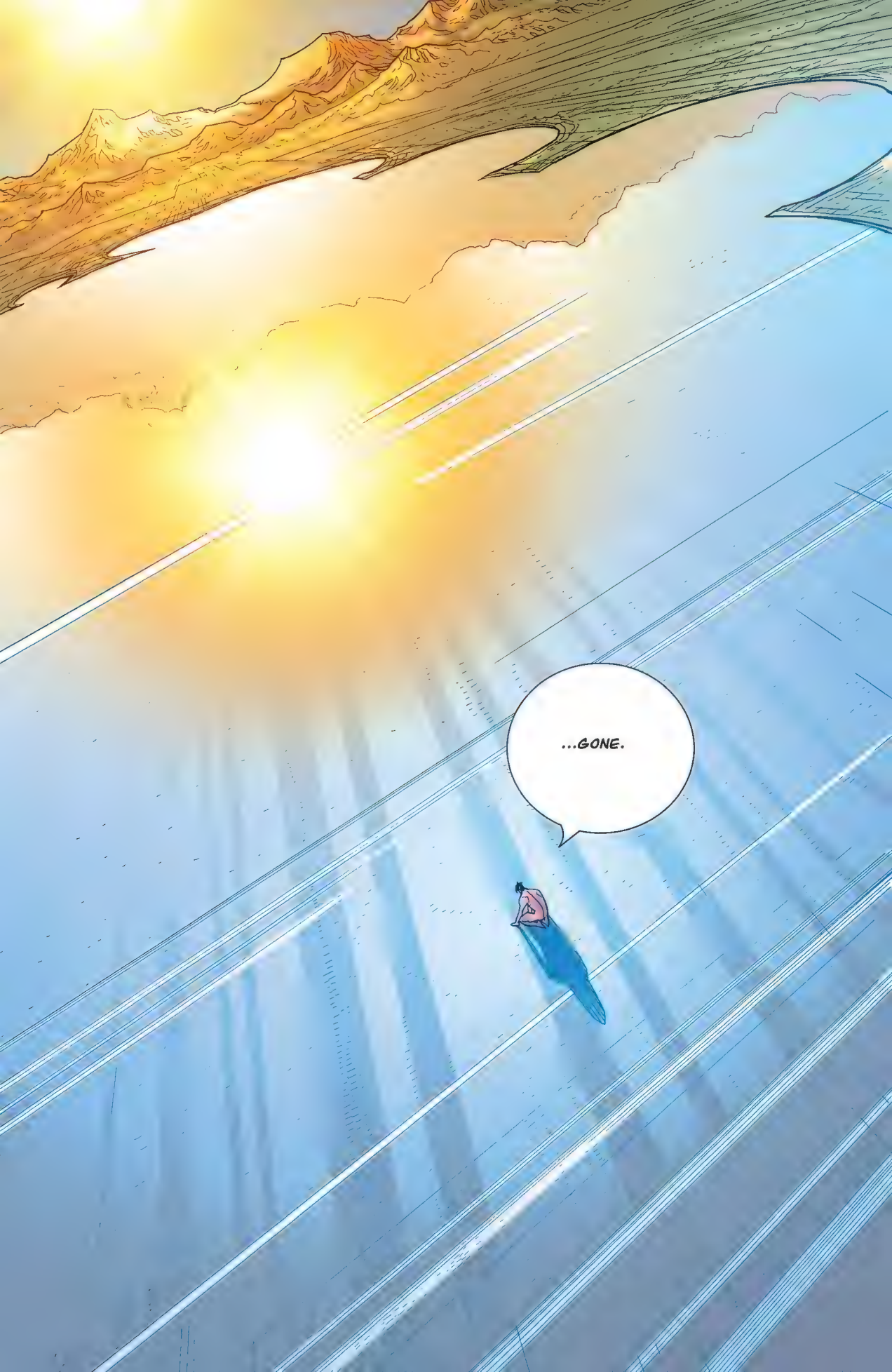












...GONE.





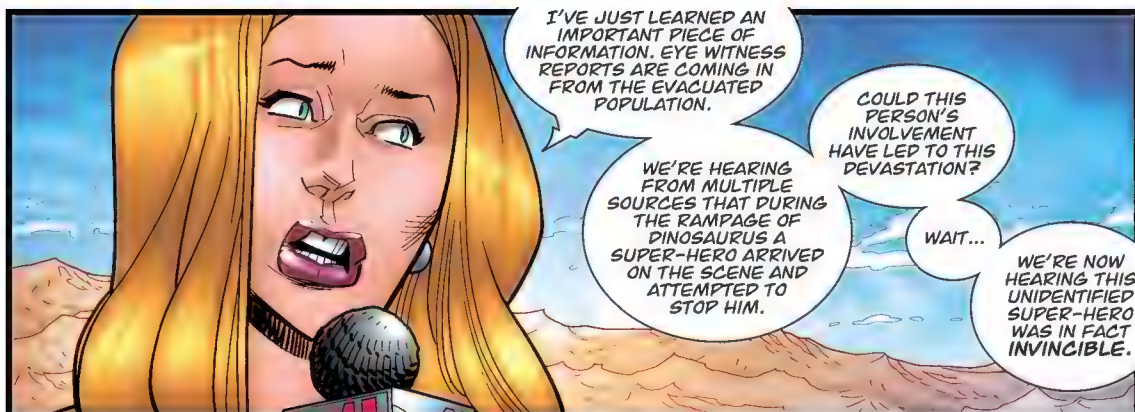
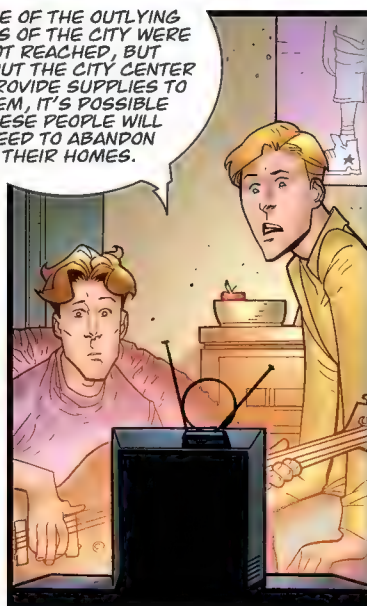
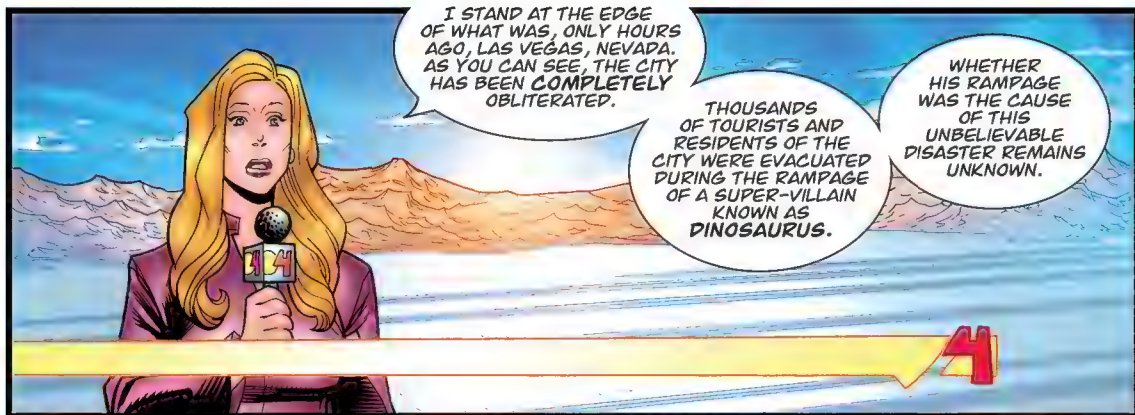


# CHAPTER 81



RYAN







WHAT?!







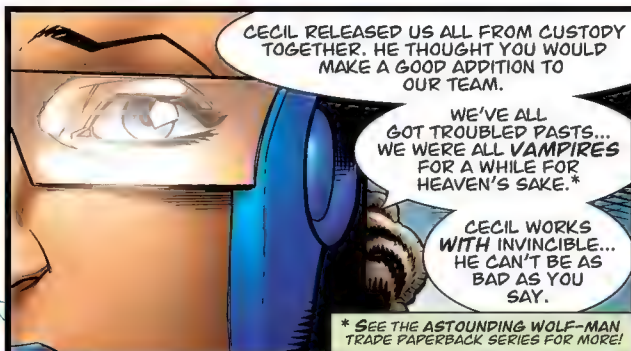
POWERPLEX,  
PLEASE...  
CALM DOWN.  
THIS ISN'T  
LIKE YOU  
AT ALL.

I KNOW  
YOUR HISTORY  
WITH INVINCIBLE,  
BUT THIS  
JUST ISN'T  
ACCEPTABLE  
BEHAVIOR.

I KNOW... I'M  
SORRY, KINETIC.  
IT'S JUST, I WASN'T  
READY FOR THIS.  
WHEN INVINCIBLE  
DISAPPEARED FOR  
SO LONG, I  
THOUGHT IT  
WAS OVER.

I'M THANKFUL  
THAT YOU GUYS  
HAVE TAKEN ME IN,  
ALLOWED ME TO JOIN  
THE ACTIONEERS...  
AND I'M REALLY  
TRYING TO CONTROL  
MYSELF.

I JUST...  
WASN'T  
PREPARED.  
I'M SORRY IF  
I STARTLED  
YOU.

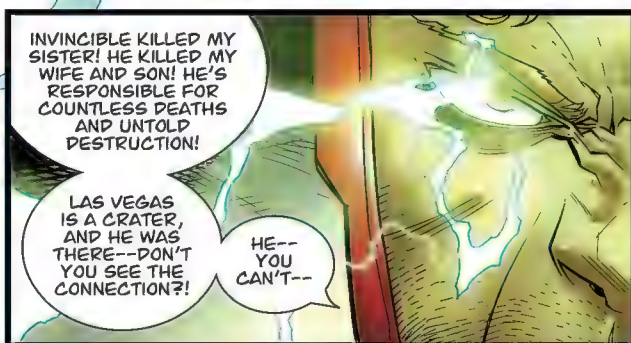


CECIL RELEASED US ALL FROM CUSTODY  
TOGETHER. HE THOUGHT YOU WOULD  
MAKE A GOOD ADDITION TO  
OUR TEAM.

WE'VE ALL  
GOT TROUBLED PASTS...  
WE WERE ALL VAMPIRES  
FOR A WHILE FOR  
HEAVEN'S SAKE.\*

CECIL WORKS  
WITH INVINCIBLE...  
HE CAN'T BE AS  
BAD AS YOU  
SAY.

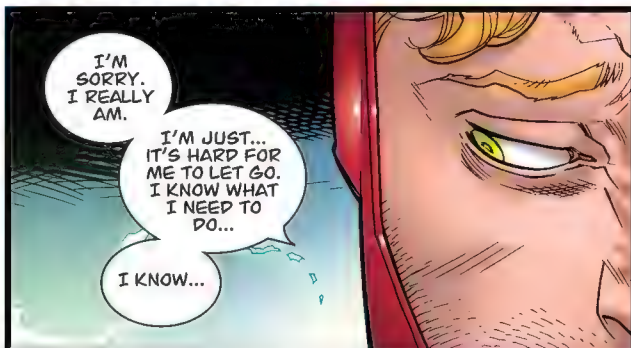
\* SEE THE ASTOUNDING WOLF-MAN  
TRADE PAPERBACK SERIES FOR MORE!



INVINCIBLE KILLED MY  
SISTER! HE KILLED MY  
WIFE AND SON! HE'S  
RESPONSIBLE FOR  
COUNTLESS DEATHS  
AND UNTOLD  
DESTRUCTION!

LAS VEGAS  
IS A CRATER,  
AND HE WAS  
THERE--DON'T  
YOU SEE THE  
CONNECTION?!

HE--  
YOU CAN'T--

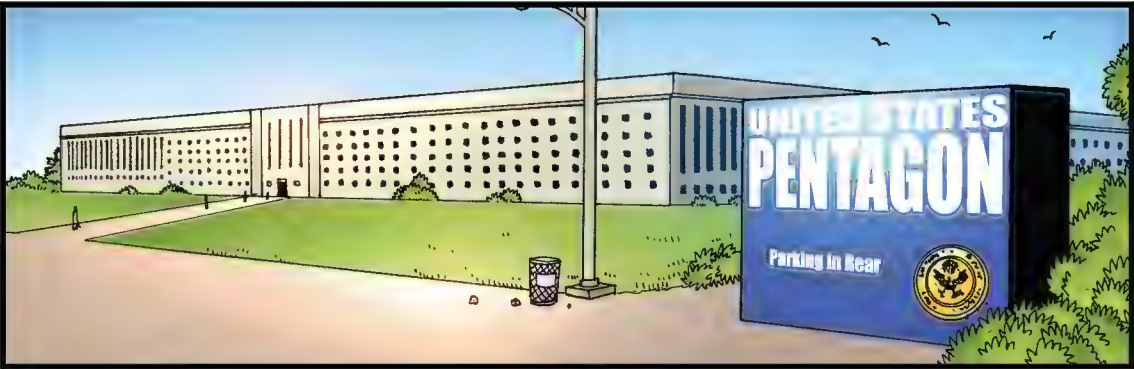


I'M  
SORRY.  
I REALLY  
AM.

I'M JUST...  
IT'S HARD FOR  
ME TO LET GO.  
I KNOW WHAT  
I NEED TO  
DO...

I KNOW...









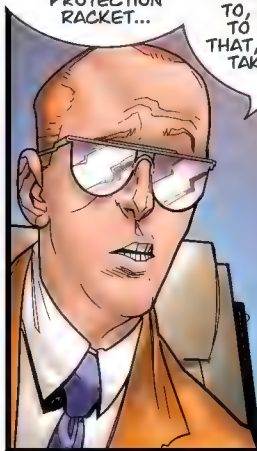
THE KID'S HAVING A HARD TIME WITH THIS ONE... YOU CAN SEE IT IN HIS EYES.

YOU'LL FEEL LESS SORRY FOR HIM WHEN YOU'VE BEEN **CHOKED** BY HIM AS MANY TIMES AS I HAVE.

LET HIM SUFFER... HE COULD USE A LITTLE HUMILITY.

THE FACT REMAINS, HE'S A ROGUE ELEMENT. HIS LITTLE SIDE BUSINESS WITH ATOM EYE, HIS SUPERHERO PROTECTION RACKET...

...IF THIS IS THE KIND OF THING IT LEADS TO, WE NEED TO MANAGE THAT, POSSIBLY TAKE OVER.



ARE WE REALLY ENTERTAINING FOR A SECOND THAT THIS WAS IN SOME WAY HIS FAULT?

HAVE YOU SEEN MY MISSION LOGS? I'VE BEEN PRESENT FOR AT LEAST THREE CITY DESTRUCTIONS IN THE PAST--I'VE STILL GOT A SEAT AT THE TABLE.

ARE YOU GUYS BLAMING ME FOR PARIS?\*

\*SEE GUARDING THE GLOBE, VOLUME ONE!



NO, AND OF COURSE I DON'T ACTUALLY BLAME INVINCIBLE FOR LAS VEGAS.

PARIS... VEGAS... THE FACT IS IT REFLECTS POORLY ON US. WE NEED TO BE BETTER ORGANIZED. THE ORDER, THIS MANIAC DINOSAURUS... OUR OPPONENTS ARE GETTING BETTER...

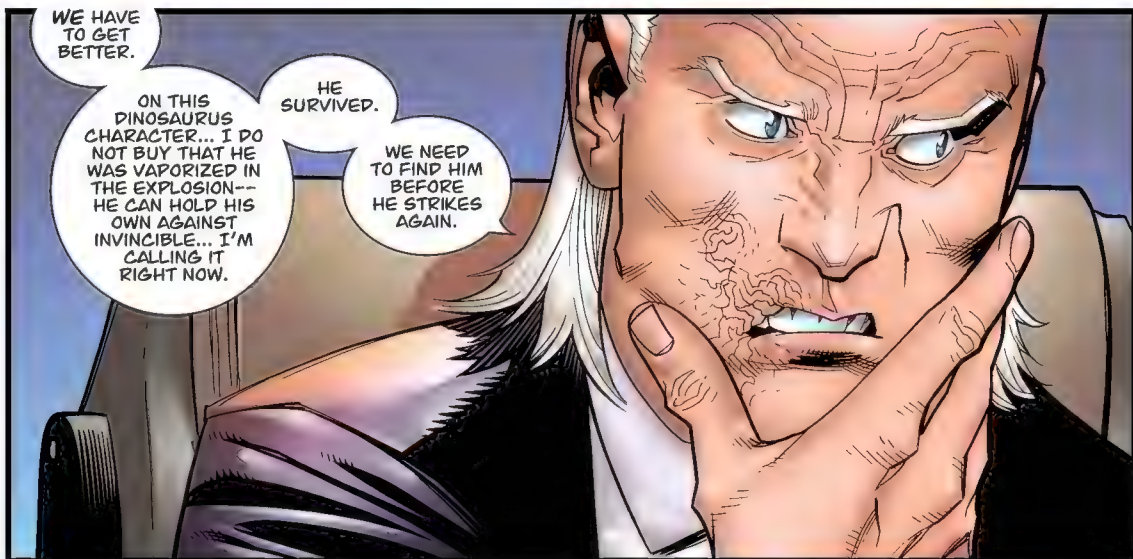


WE HAVE TO GET BETTER.

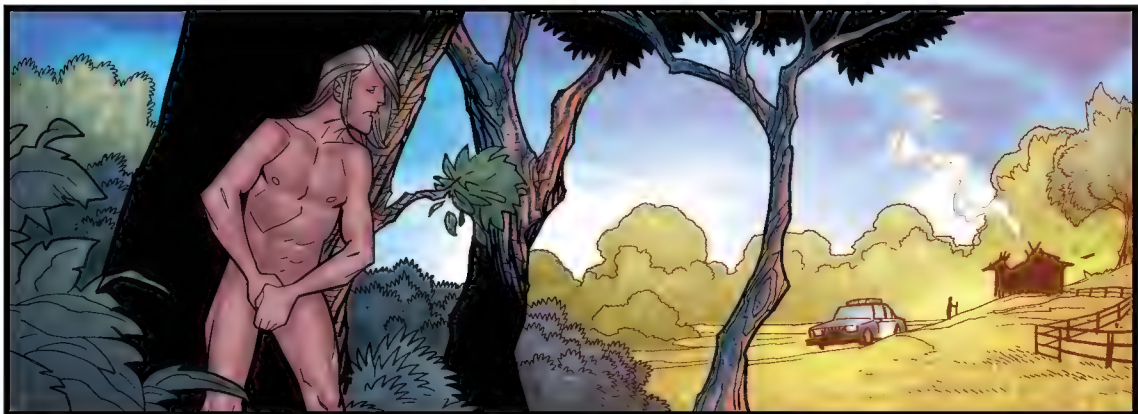
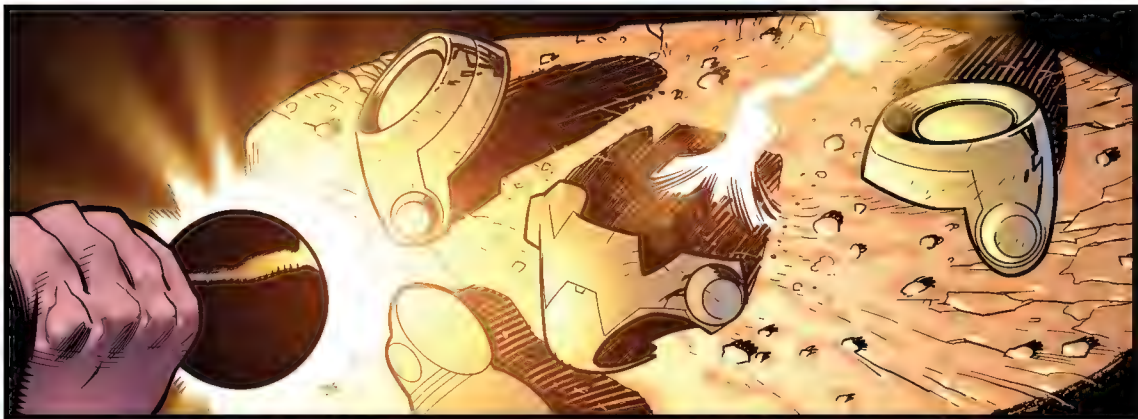
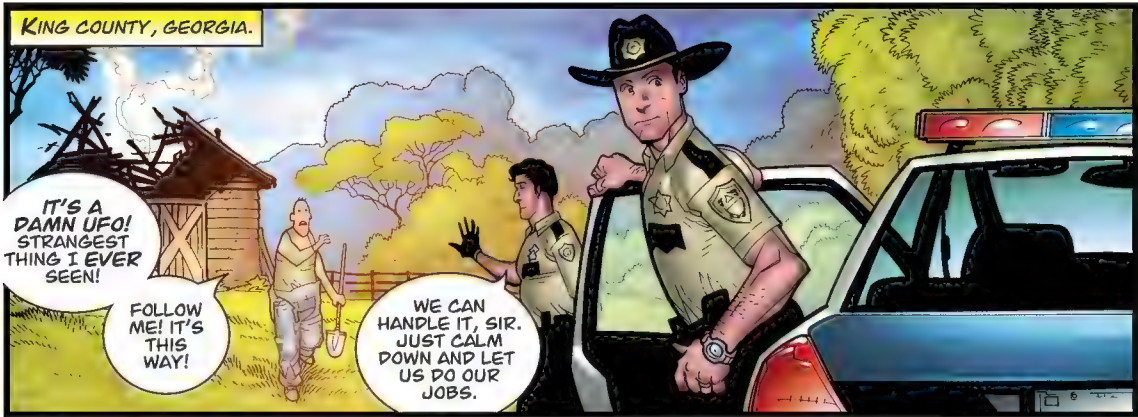
ON THIS DINOSAURUS CHARACTER... I DO NOT BUY THAT HE WAS VAPORIZED IN THE EXPLOSION-- HE CAN HOLD HIS OWN AGAINST INVINCIBLE... I'M CALLING IT RIGHT NOW.

HE SURVIVED.

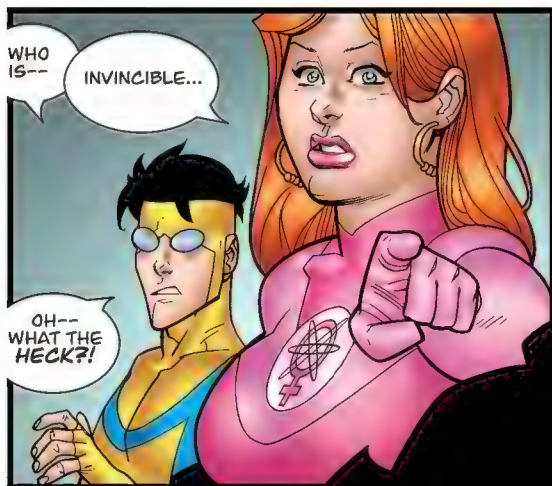
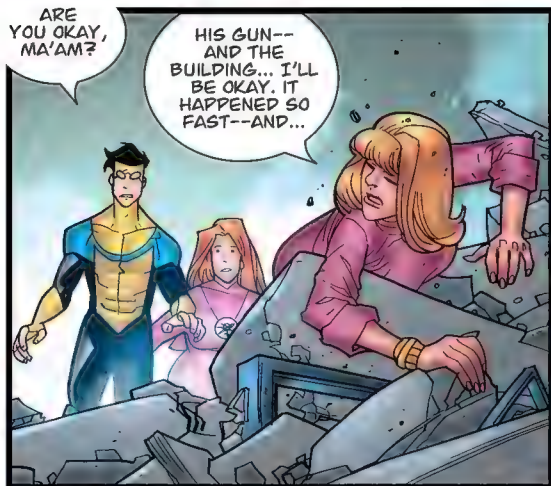
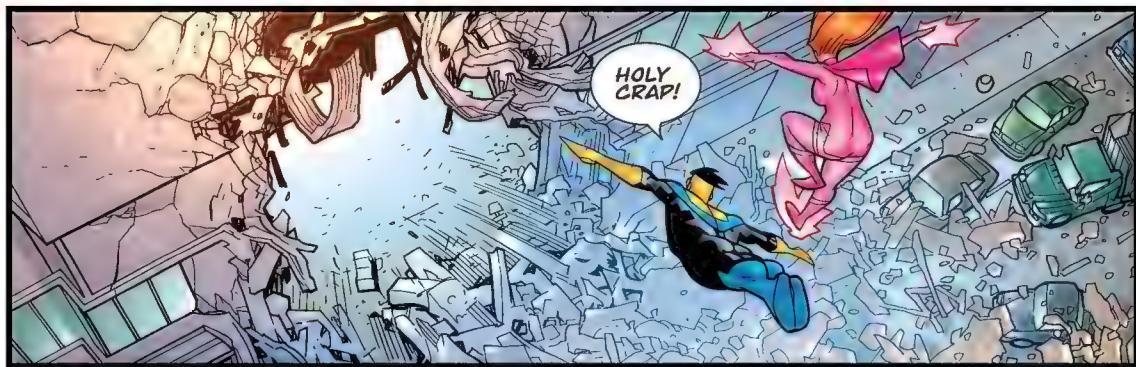
WE NEED TO FIND HIM BEFORE HE STRIKES AGAIN.



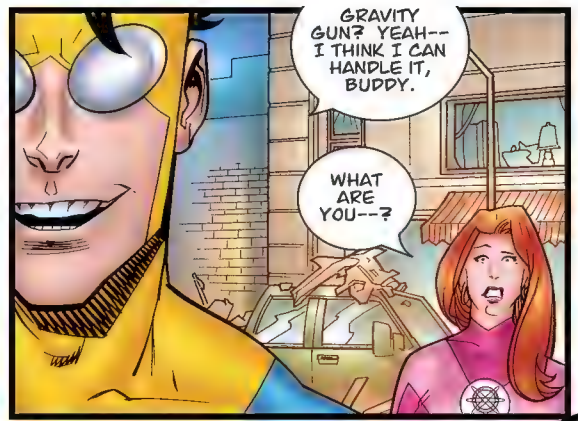
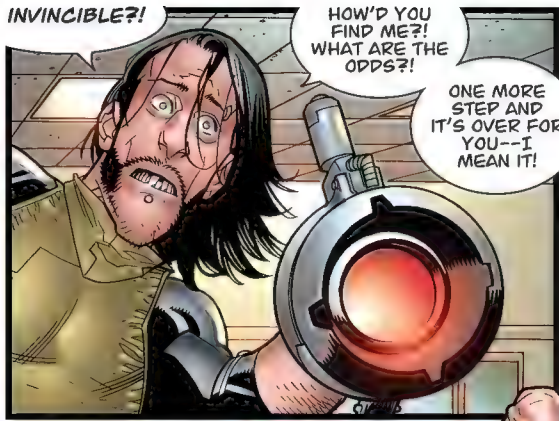




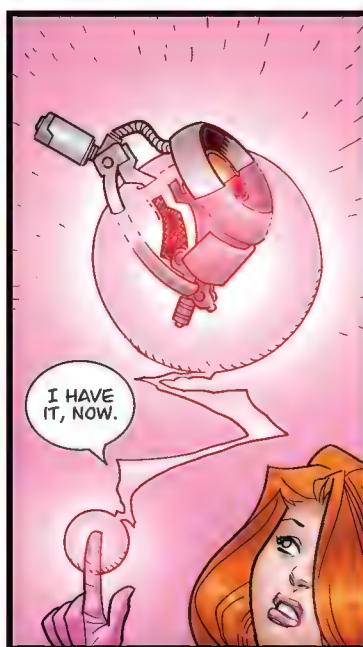
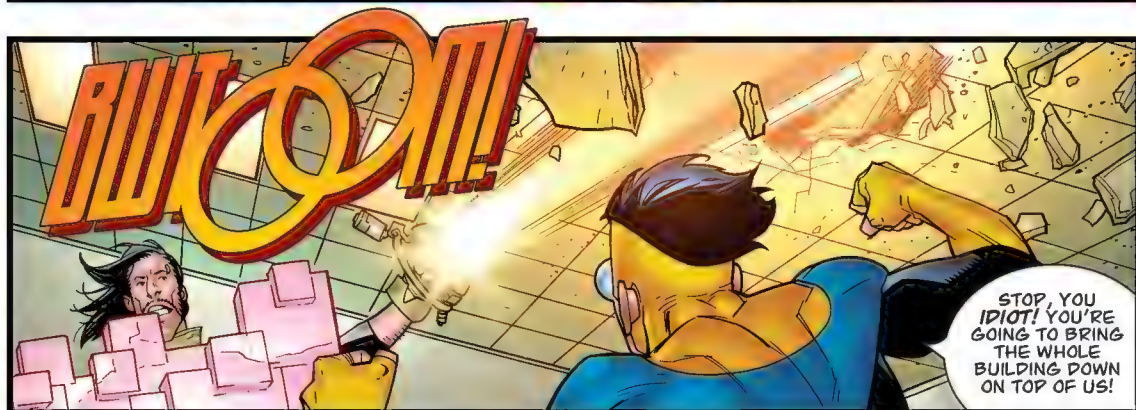
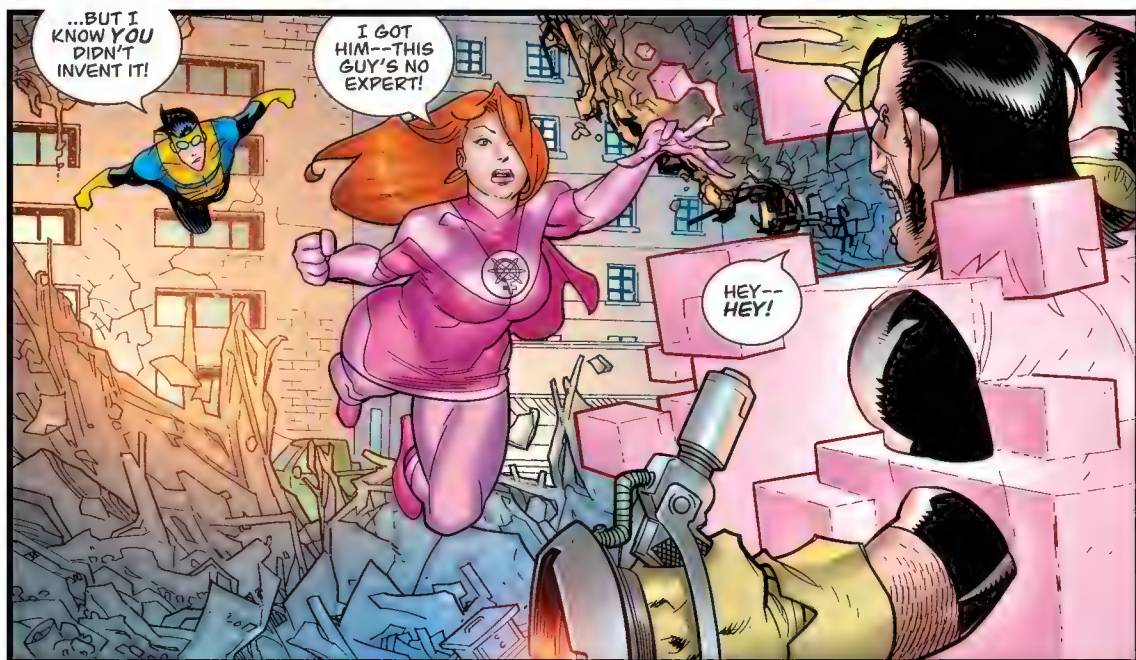




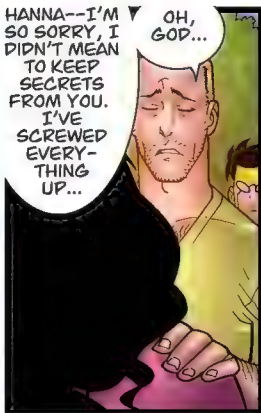




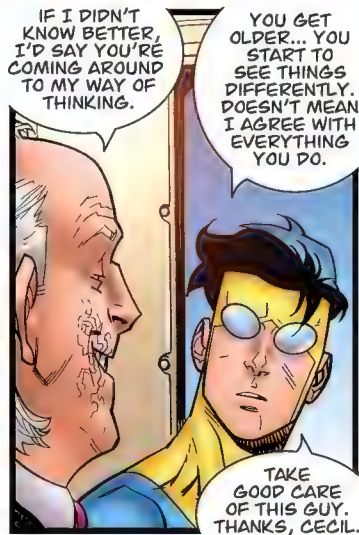
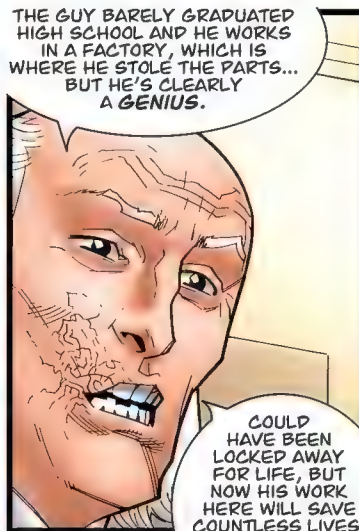
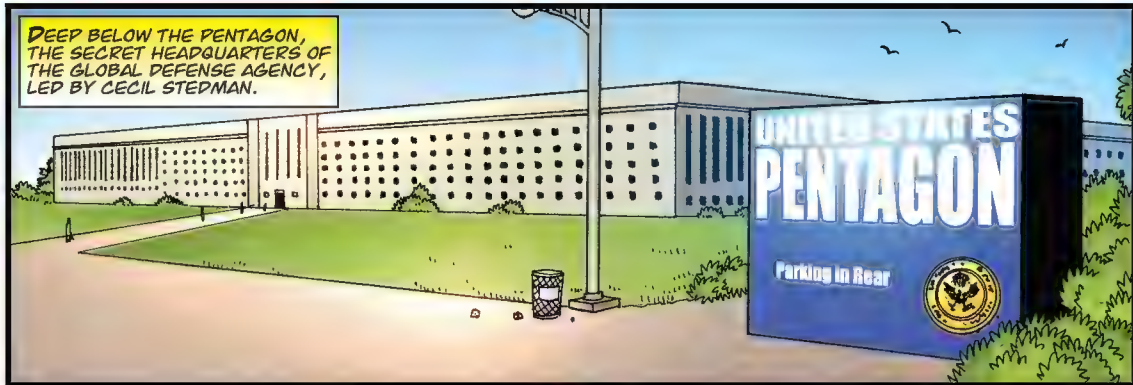




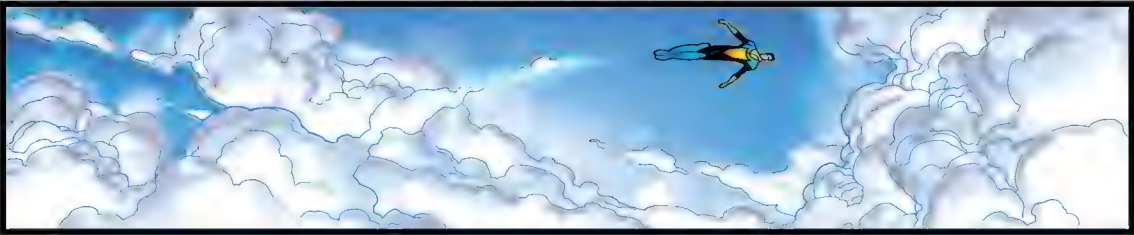
















WHY COULDN'T YOU HAVE STAYED IN SPACE?! THINGS WERE SO MUCH BETTER WITHOUT YOU HERE!

I WAS GETTING MY LIFE IN ORDER... DEALING WITH BECKY AND JACK'S DEATH... I WAS COPING--DOING SOME GOOD EVEN.

I WAS RELEASED, I JOINED THE ACTIONEERS!



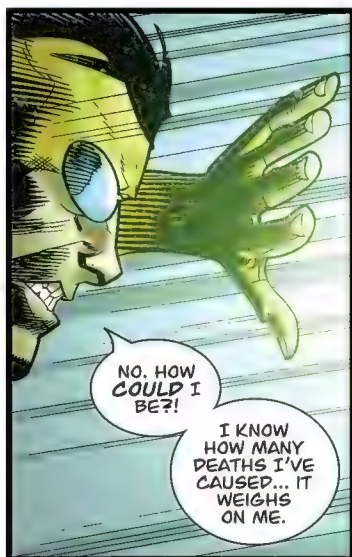
THANKS FOR THE UPDATE?

WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO SAY?



LAS VEGAS!

HOW MANY PEOPLE HAVE TO DIE BEFORE YOU SEE WHAT YOU'VE DONE?! ARE YOU REALLY OBLIVIOUS TO THE DESTRUCTION YOU CAUSE?

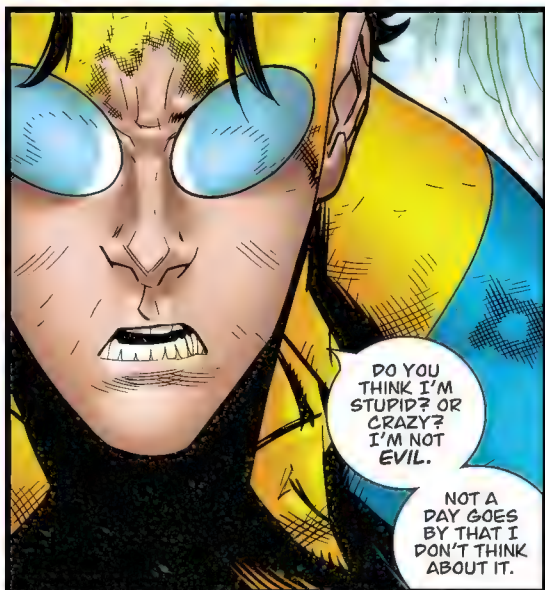


NO. HOW COULD I BE?!

I KNOW HOW MANY DEATHS I'VE CAUSED... IT WEIGHS ON ME.



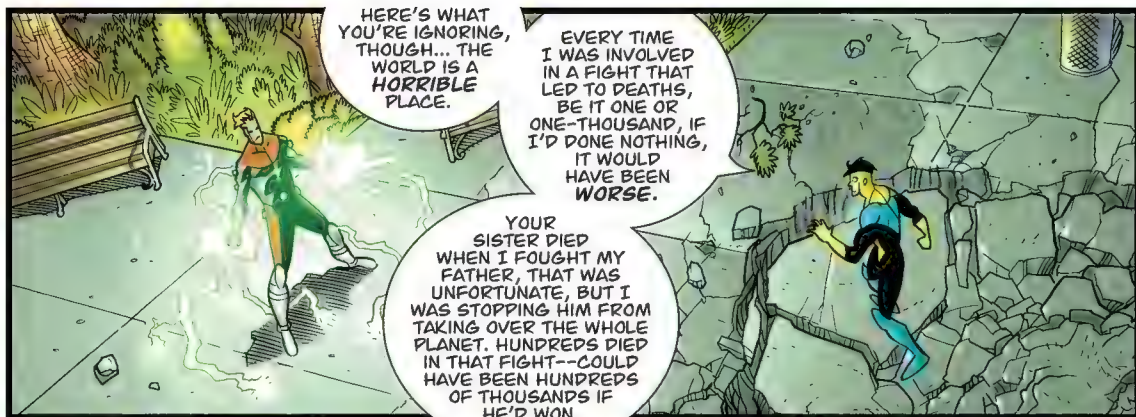
WHAT?



DO YOU THINK I'M STUPID? OR CRAZY? I'M NOT EVIL.

NOT A DAY GOES BY THAT I DON'T THINK ABOUT IT.





HERE'S WHAT YOU'RE IGNORING, THOUGH... THE WORLD IS A HORRIBLE PLACE.

EVERY TIME I WAS INVOLVED IN A FIGHT THAT LED TO DEATHS, BE IT ONE OR ONE-THOUSAND, IF I'D DONE NOTHING, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN WORSE.

YOUR SISTER DIED WHEN I FOUGHT MY FATHER, THAT WAS UNFORTUNATE, BUT I WAS STOPPING HIM FROM TAKING OVER THE WHOLE PLANET. HUNDREDS DIED IN THAT FIGHT--COULD HAVE BEEN HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS IF HE'D WON.



**BZZZAKKT!**

YOU LIE!



ACK!

I'M NOT--LYING--AND I'M--NOT GOING TO FIGHT YOU--I KNOW HOW YOU ABSORB ENERGY.



**BZZZAKKT!**

COUNTLESS DEATHS ARE THE RESULT OF YOUR BATTLES! I REFUSE TO BELIEVE THINGS WOULDN'T BE BETTER WITHOUT YOU!

YOU'RE RECKLESS, SLOPPY-- YOU MAKE SITUATIONS WORSE!

YOU'RE **WRONG**-- AND YOU'RE ALMOST OUT OF ENERGY, YOUR BLASTS ARE--WEAKER.

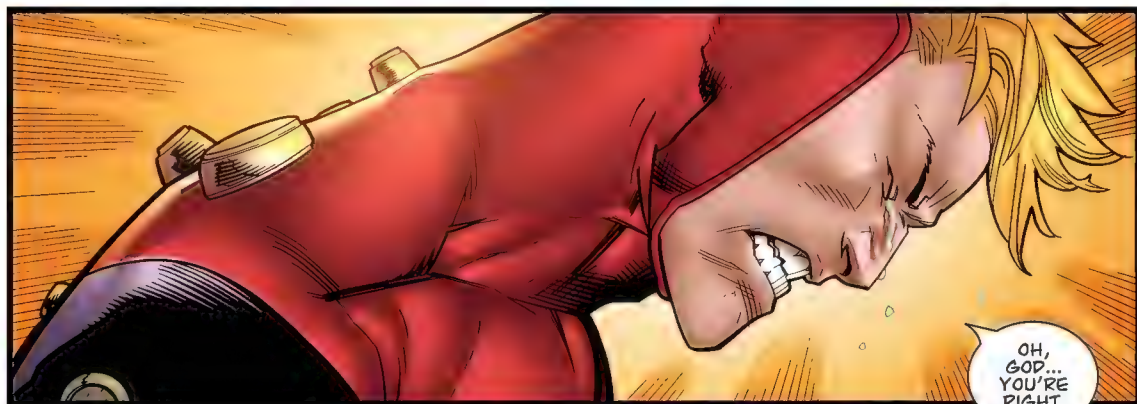
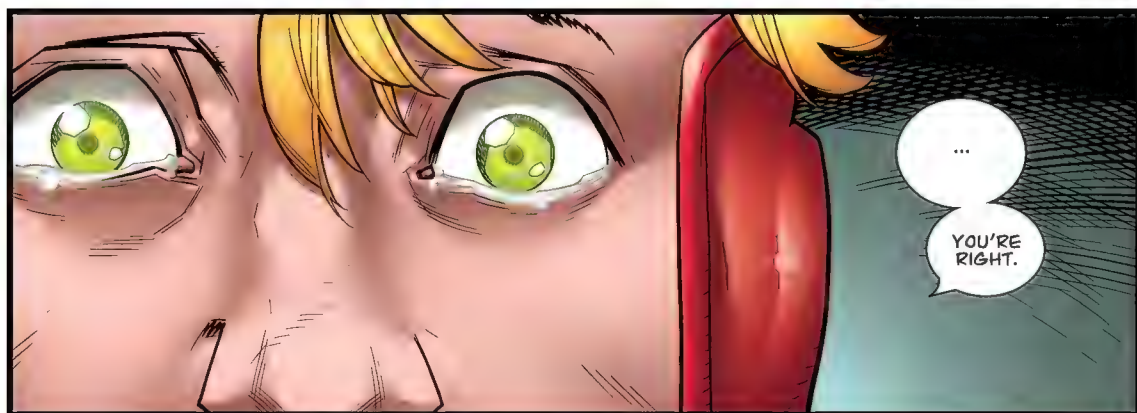
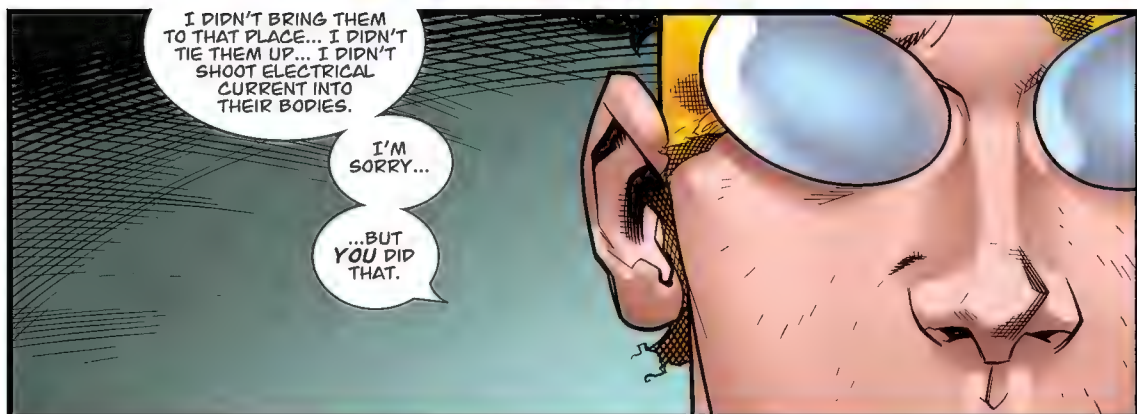


I'VE SAVED THE WORLD, POWERPLEX!

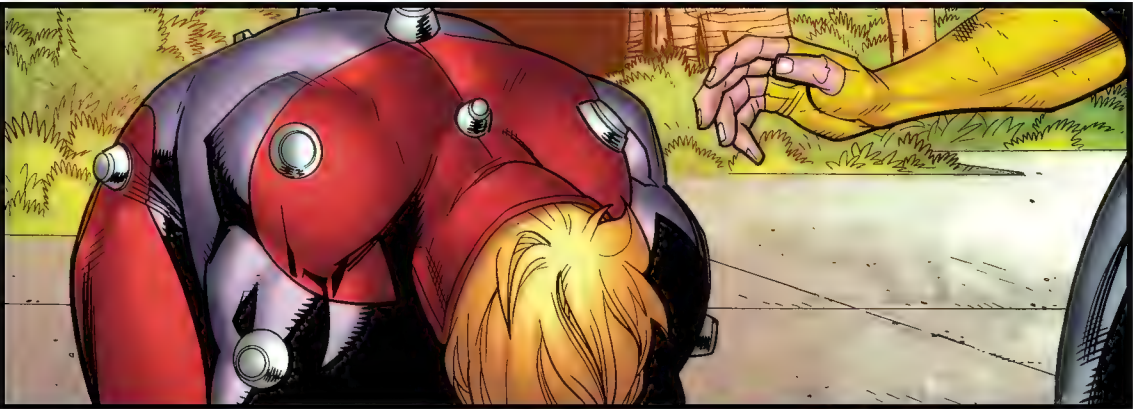
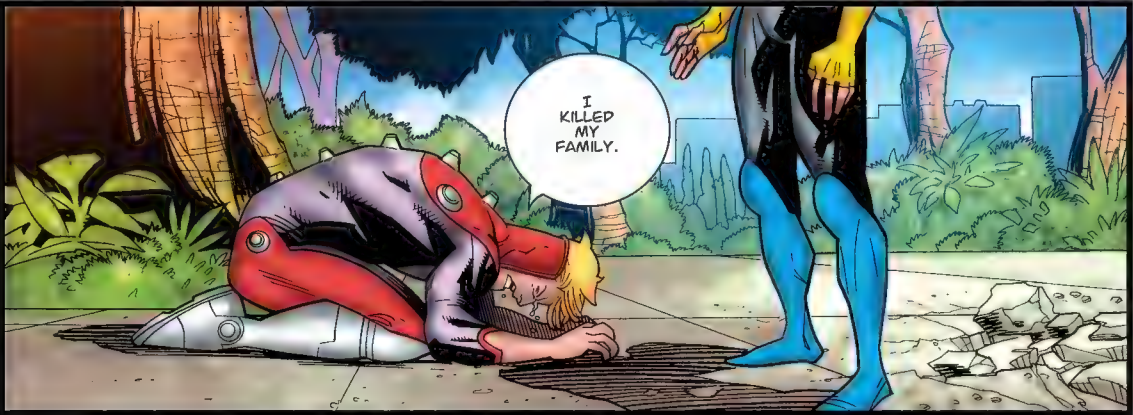
THAT'S WHAT I WAS DOING IN SPACE-- THAT'S WHAT I DO--WHAT I WAS TRYING TO DO IN LAS VEGAS.

I DIDN'T PLANT THOSE BOMBS THERE, I DIDN'T TURN THEM ON--ALL I DID WAS FAIL TO STOP THEM.









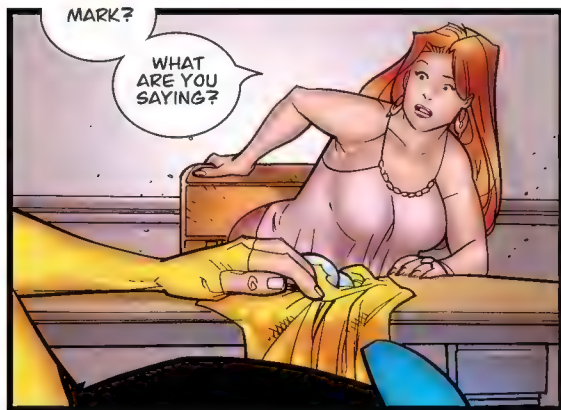
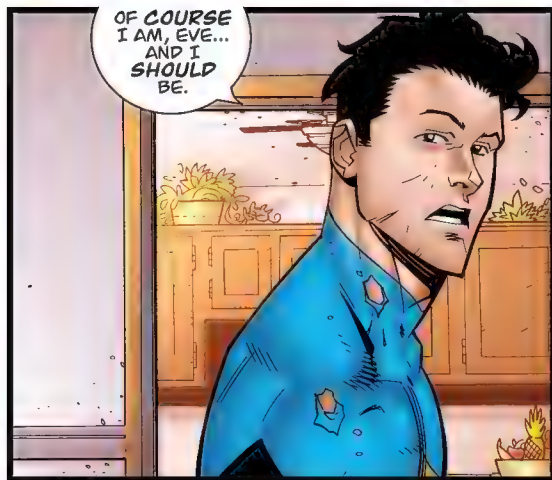
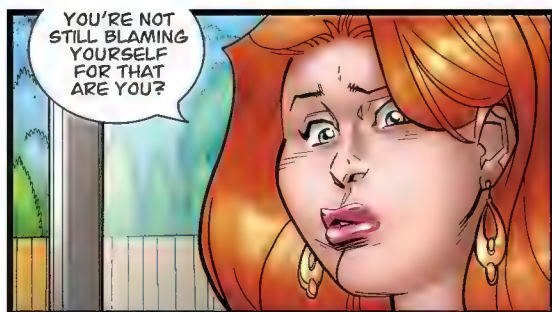




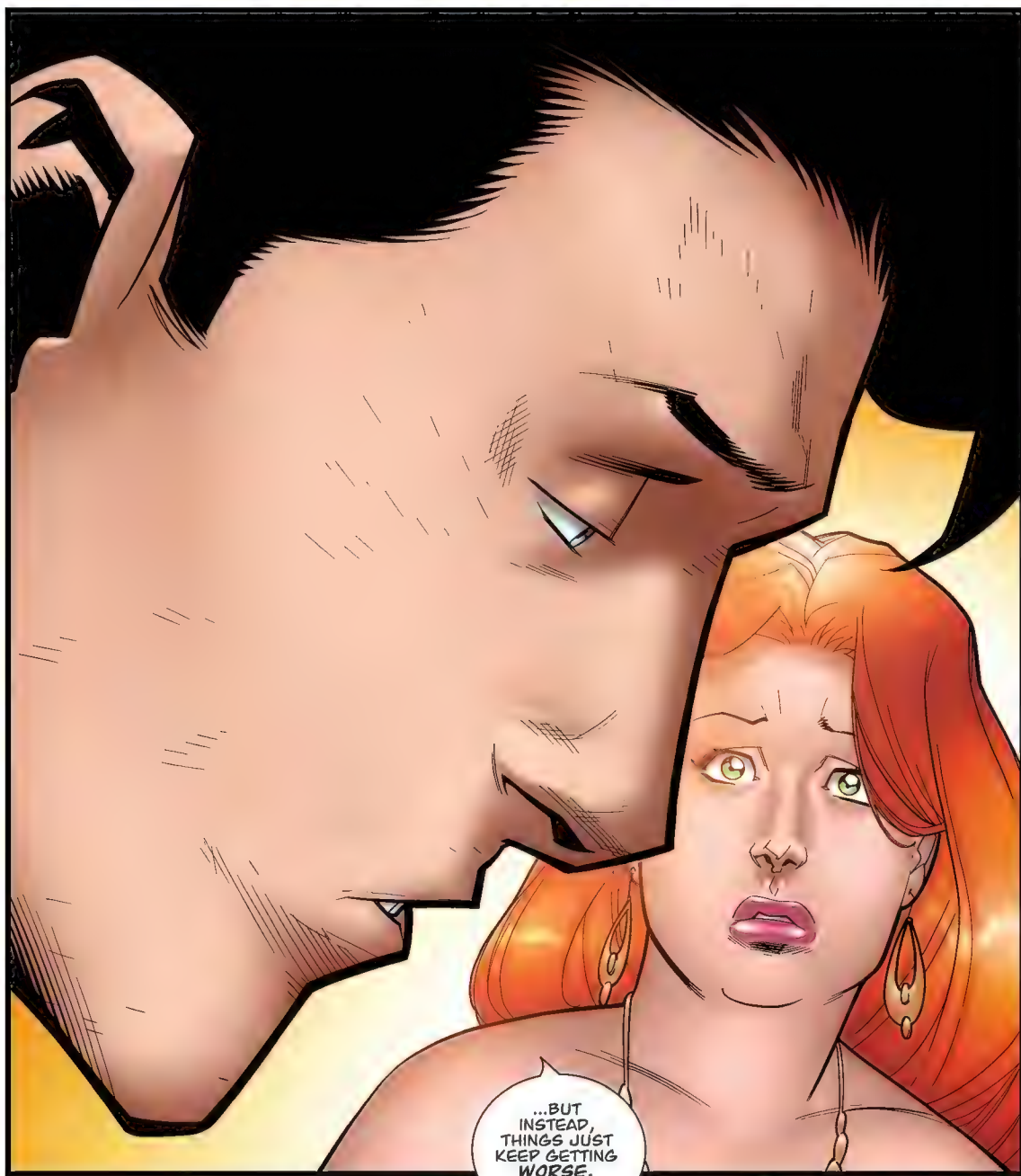
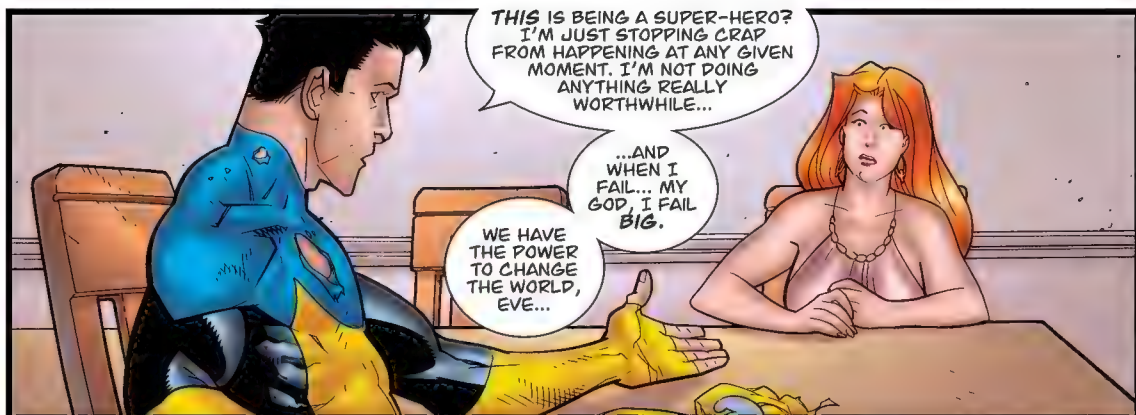


















# CHAPTER 82





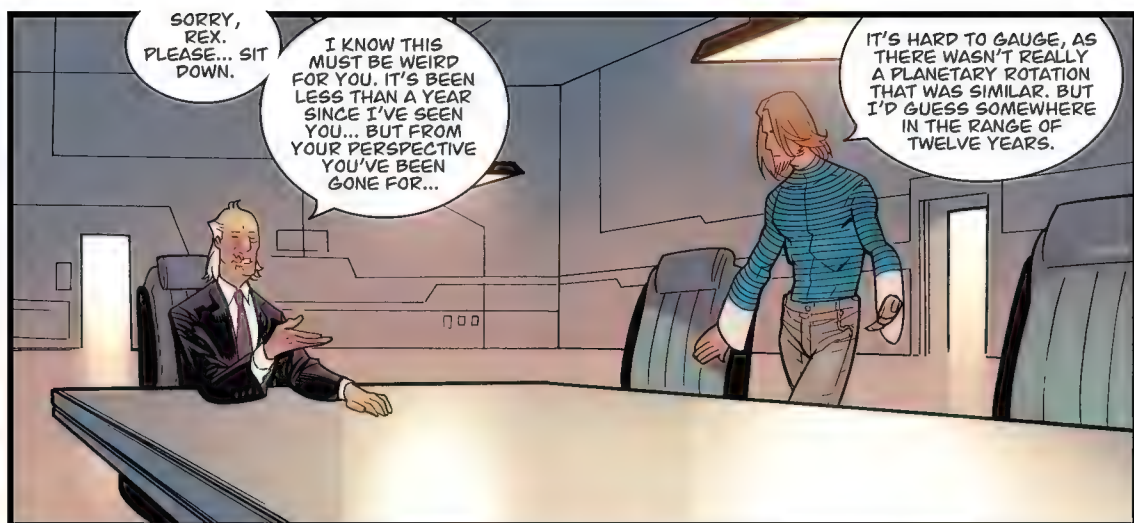


YOU  
WANTED  
TO SEE ME,  
SIR?

ROBOT,  
YES... IT'S  
GOOD TO  
HAVE YOU  
BACK.

REX,  
ACTUALLY...  
IF YOU  
WOULD. I  
PREFER  
THAT,  
NOW.





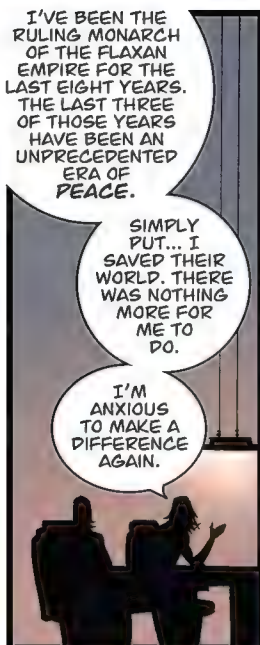
SORRY, REX. PLEASE... SIT DOWN.

I KNOW THIS MUST BE WEIRD FOR YOU. IT'S BEEN LESS THAN A YEAR SINCE I'VE SEEN YOU... BUT FROM YOUR PERSPECTIVE YOU'VE BEEN GONE FOR...

IT'S HARD TO GAUGE, AS THERE WASN'T REALLY A PLANETARY ROTATION THAT WAS SIMILAR. BUT I'D GUESS SOMEWHERE IN THE RANGE OF TWELVE YEARS.



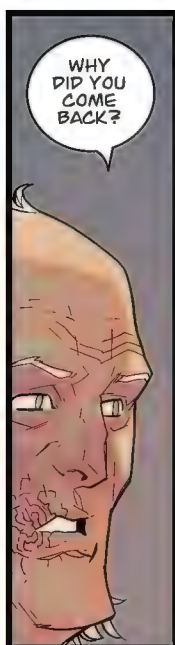
I'M TOLD YOU WANT TO JUST DIVE BACK INTO THINGS. YOU'RE READY TO WORK?



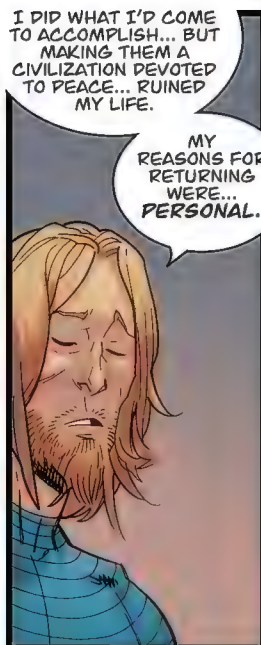
I'VE BEEN THE RULING MONARCH OF THE FLAXAN EMPIRE FOR THE LAST EIGHT YEARS. THE LAST THREE OF THOSE YEARS HAVE BEEN AN UNPRECEDENTED ERA OF PEACE.

SIMPLY PUT... I SAVED THEIR WORLD. THERE WAS NOTHING MORE FOR ME TO DO.

I'M ANXIOUS TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE AGAIN.



WHY DID YOU COME BACK?

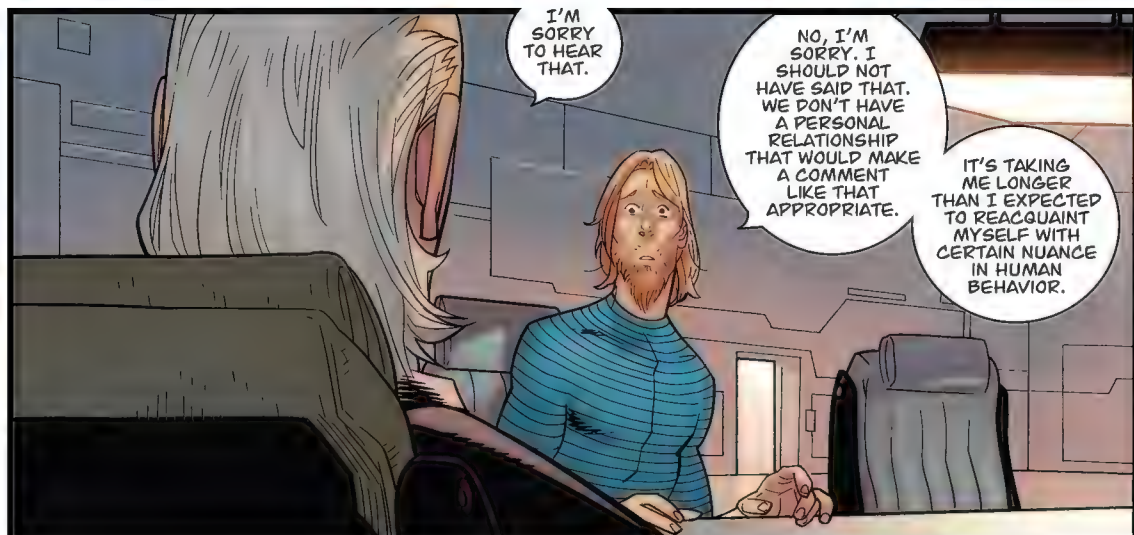


I DID WHAT I'D COME TO ACCOMPLISH... BUT MAKING THEM A CIVILIZATION DEVOTED TO PEACE... RUINED MY LIFE.

MY REASONS FOR RETURNING WERE... PERSONAL.



...



I'M SORRY TO HEAR THAT.

NO, I'M SORRY. I SHOULD NOT HAVE SAID THAT. WE DON'T HAVE A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP THAT WOULD MAKE A COMMENT LIKE THAT APPROPRIATE.

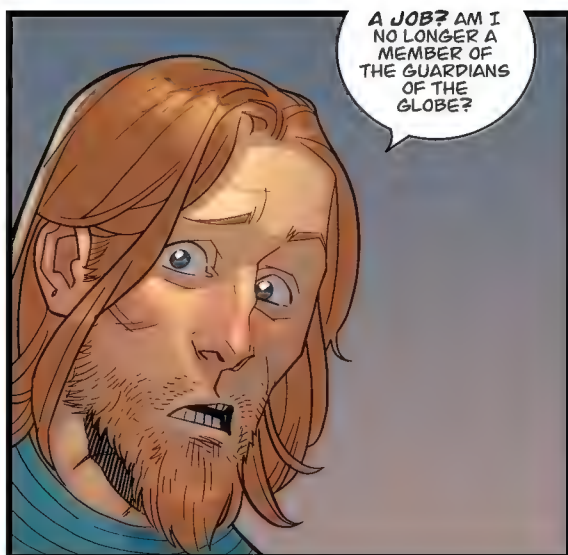
IT'S TAKING ME LONGER THAN I EXPECTED TO REACQUAINT MYSELF WITH CERTAIN NUANCE IN HUMAN BEHAVIOR.





NO, I UNDERSTAND, COMPLETELY, IT'S OKAY... REALLY.

I DON'T WANT TO TAKE UP TOO MUCH OF YOUR TIME, REX. I BROUGHT YOU HERE TO OFFER YOU A JOB.



A JOB? AM I NO LONGER A MEMBER OF THE GUARDIANS OF THE GLOBE?

YOU ARE, BUT... I SEE SOMETHING **BIGGER** FOR YOU. THE CLIMATE FOR SUPER-HUMANS HAS CHANGED SOMEWHAT IN YOUR TIME AWAY.

PARIS, FRANCE AND LAS VEGAS, NEVADA, AS I'M SURE YOU'VE HEARD, HAVE BOTH BEEN DESTROYED. THE EVIL OF OUR WORLD HAS... ORGANIZED, THEY'VE BECOME MORE EFFICIENT... MORE DEADLY.

THEIR PLANS ARE BIGGER, MORE WELL THOUGHT OUT--THEY'RE, WELL... THEY'RE SUCCEEDING AT THINGS THEY USUALLY FAIL AT.

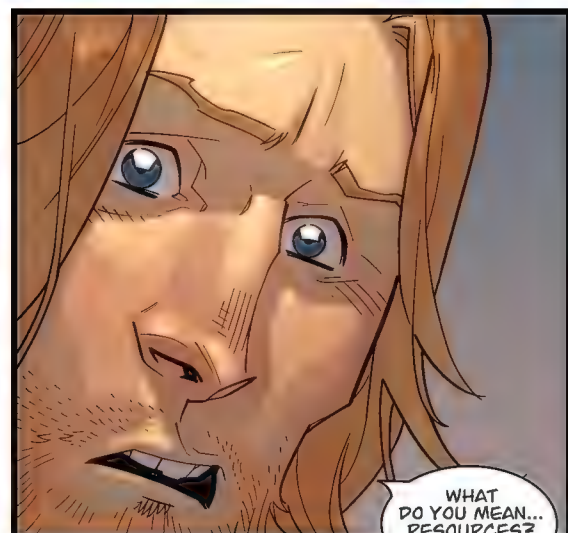
I UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU'RE SAYING. I CAN SEE HOW THIS WOULD CAUSE GREAT CONCERN FOR YOU.

WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO DO?



I'M FRUSTRATED, BECAUSE I LOOK AROUND AND I SEE THE RESOURCES NEEDED TO PUT AN END TO ALL THIS, BUT IT'S NOT COMING TOGETHER.

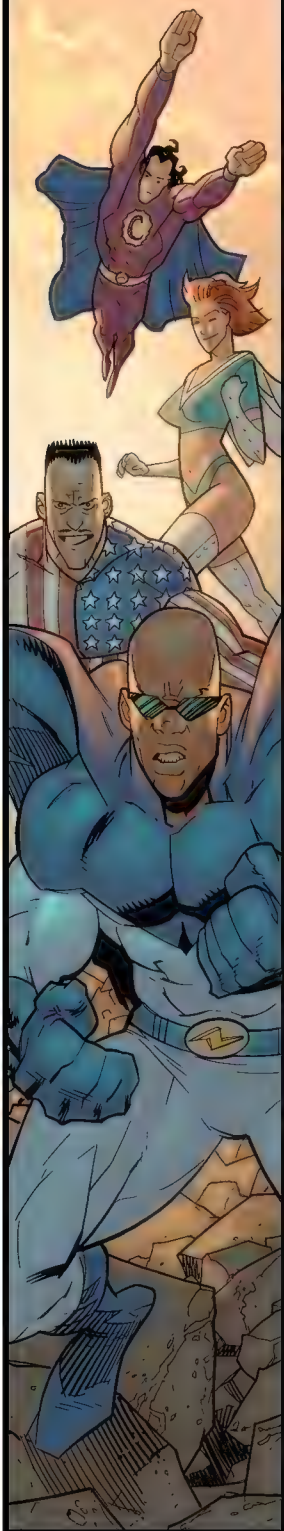
I THINK YOU'RE THE KEY TO CHANGING THAT.



WHAT DO YOU MEAN... RESOURCES?



I'VE GOT ORGANIZED  
TEAMS OF HEROES  
BY THE DOZENS.  
I'VE GOT CAPES,  
INCORPORATED.



THE ACTIONEERS.



WOLF-MAN  
AND THE  
WOLF C.O.R.P.S.

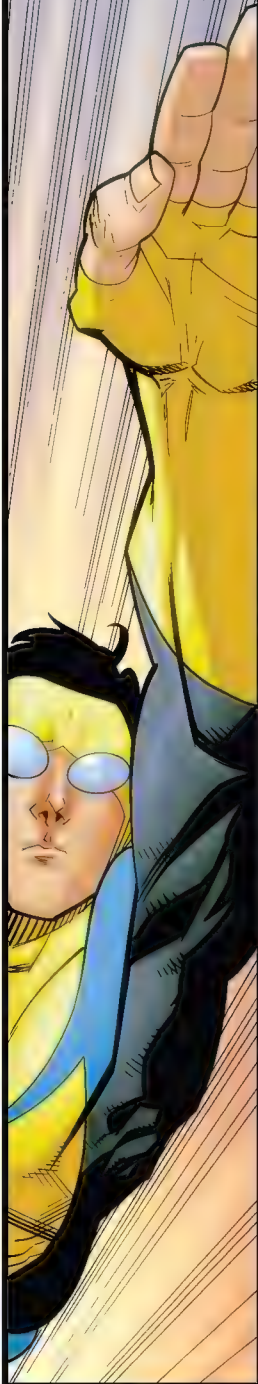




TECH JACKET.



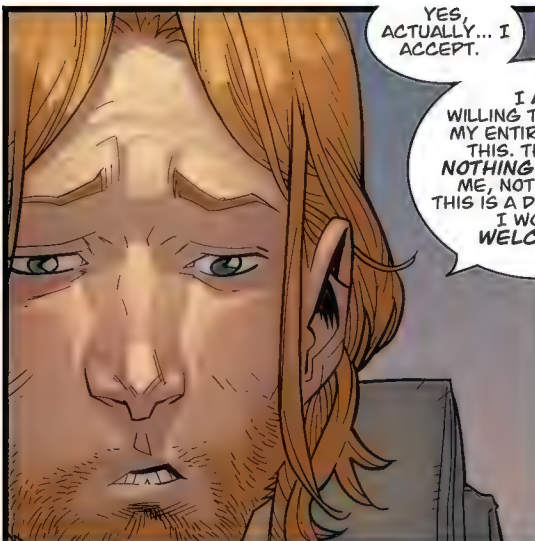
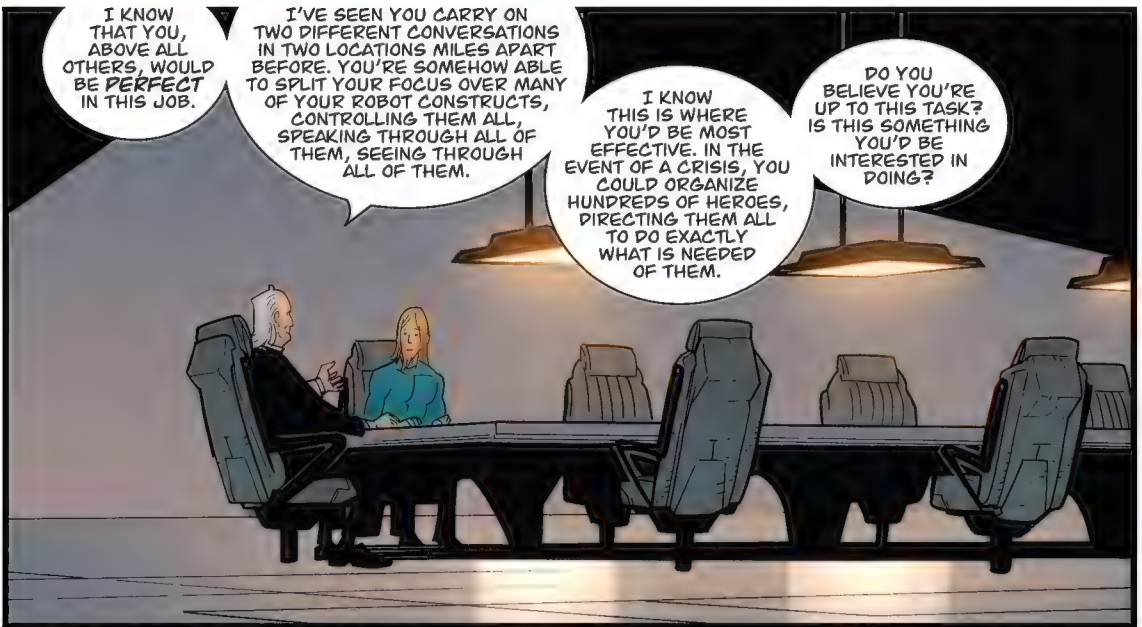
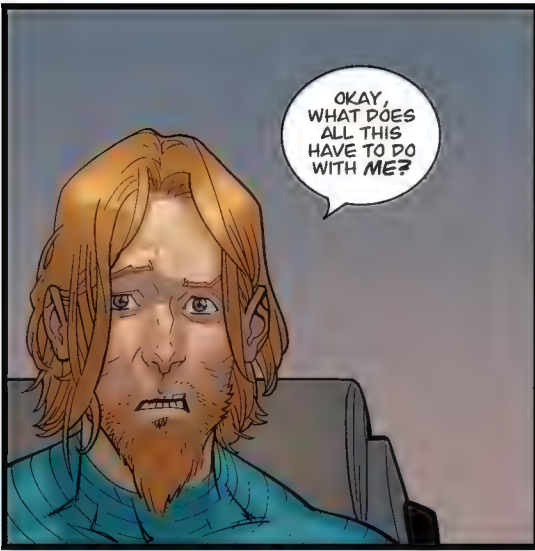
THOUGH HE DOESN'T  
**DIRECTLY** ANSWER  
TO ME, THERE'S ALSO  
INVINCIBLE.



AND THEN THERE'S THE  
NEWLY EXPANDED ROSTER  
OF THE GUARDIANS  
OF THE GLOBE.

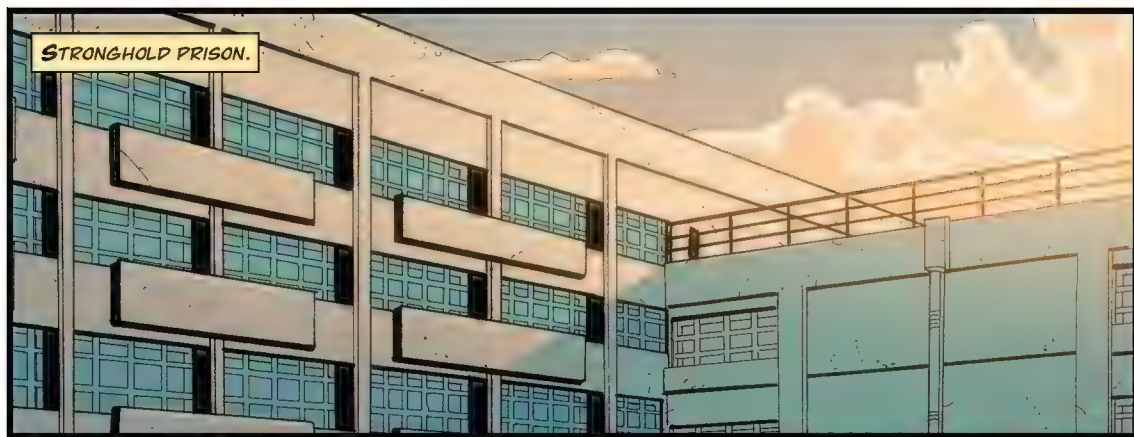








STRONGHOLD PRISON.



THIS IS VERY UNUSUAL, INVINCIBLE. I DON'T KNOW EXACTLY WHAT YOU'VE GOT IN MIND, BUT I'M CONCERNED.

I'LL BE HONEST WITH YOU... AFTER WHAT HAPPENED IN LAS VEGAS UNDER YOUR WATCH, I WANTED TO REFUSE YOUR REQUEST.

WHY DIDN'T YOU?



LET'S JUST SAY YOU'VE GOT FRIENDS IN HIGH PLACES. FRIENDS THAT TRUST YOU.

MORE THAN I DO.

SPEAKING OF WHICH, I'D LIKE TO DISCUSS OUR CONTRACT WITH INVINCIBLE, INC. I DON'T KNOW THAT--



THAT'S NOT WHAT I'M HERE FOR. IF YOU'VE GOT PROBLEMS WITH THE BUSINESS SIDE OF THINGS, YOU KNOW EVE HANDLES THAT.

THIS IS THE CELL, SIR.

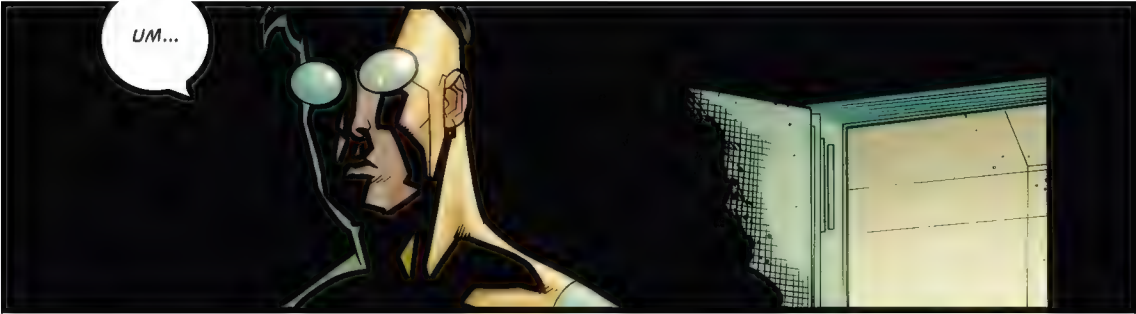


OPEN IT UP.

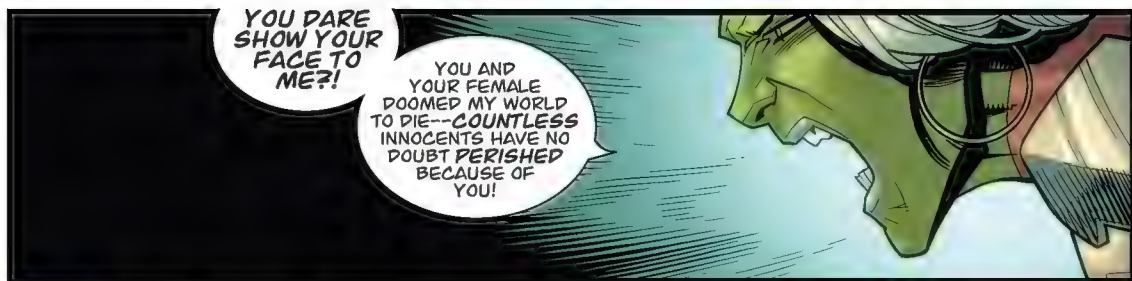
SHE'S ALL YOURS, KID.











YOU DARE  
SHOW YOUR  
FACE TO  
ME?!

YOU AND  
YOUR FEMALE  
DOOMED MY WORLD  
TO DIE--COUNTLESS  
INNOCENTS HAVE NO  
DOUBT PERISHED  
BECAUSE OF  
YOU!



I KNOW,  
I'M  
SORRY,  
BUT--

I WILL  
KILL  
YOU!

THAT'S  
WHY  
I'M--

YOU GOT  
LUCKY THE  
FIRST TIME--  
I WON'T  
UNDER-  
ESTIMATE  
YOU!

I JUST  
WANT--

YOUR  
DEATH  
WILL  
BE--

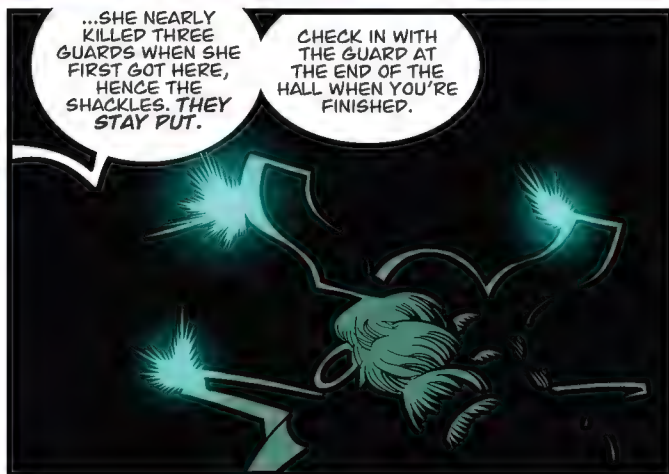


LET ME  
SPEAK!!



CAN YOU UNSHACKLE HER,  
AT LEAST A LITTLE BIT--THE  
NECK, THE FEET, SOMETHING?  
ALL HER POWER WAS IN  
HER STAFF, SHE'S  
HARMLESS  
WITHOUT IT.

MAYBE  
TO YOU...



...SHE NEARLY  
KILLED THREE  
GUARDS WHEN SHE  
FIRST GOT HERE,  
HENCE THE  
SHACKLES. THEY  
STAY PUT.

CHECK IN WITH  
THE GUARD AT  
THE END OF THE  
HALL WHEN YOU'RE  
FINISHED.





THEIR FATHER IS PROBABLY LETTING THEM WATCH TV THE WHOLE TIME I'M GONE... WHICH THEY'LL LOVE. AND REALLY, THANKS FOR CALLING. ANY EXCUSE FOR ME TO GET OUT OF THE HOUSE.

I LOVE MY KIDS, I REALLY DO. BUT I TAKE EVERY LITTLE BREAK I CAN.

I WAS REALLY LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING YOU AGAIN. I'M SORRY HOW LAST TIME--



OH, AND SALAD TIME! I DIDN'T EVEN NOTICE UNTIL NOW.

YOU LOSING THE WEIGHT FOR MARK NOW THAT HE'S BACK?

BRAVO, GIRL.



MY, GOD--NO. I'M EATING A SALAD BECAUSE I... LIKE SALAD.

AND I DIDN'T GAIN THE WEIGHT FROM OVER-EATING. IT WAS BECAUSE I JUST STOPPED... DOING... ANYTHING WHILE MARK WAS GONE.

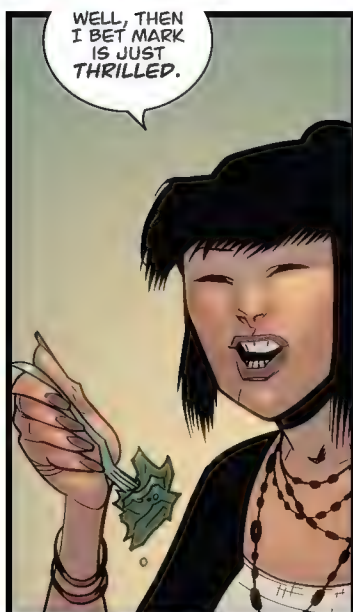


I NEVER REALIZED HOW MANY CALORIES USING MY POWERS BURNED. I DIDN'T REALLY DO MUCH OF ANYTHING SUPER-HERO-WISE WHILE MARK WAS GONE.

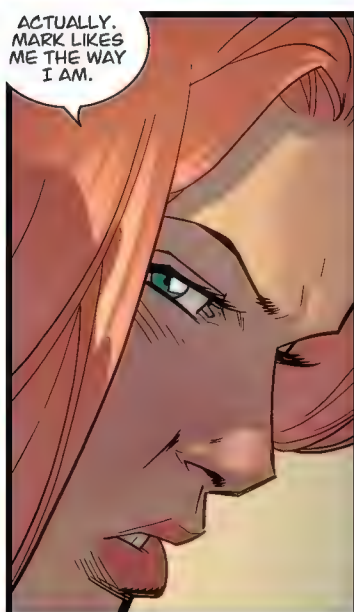
I'M ACTUALLY SLOWLY LOSING WEIGHT NOW THAT I'M BACK IN ACTION FROM TIME TO TIME.



WELL, THEN I BET MARK IS JUST THRILLED.



ACTUALLY. MARK LIKES ME THE WAY I AM.



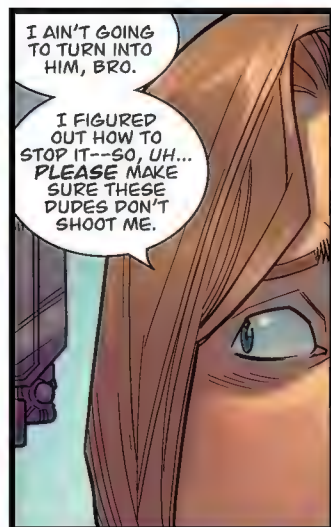
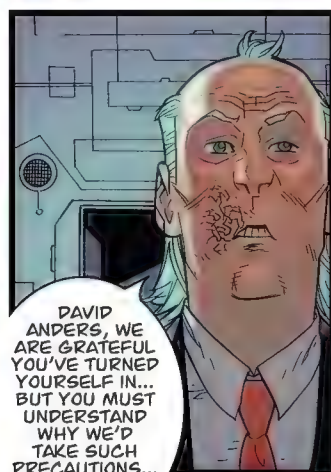
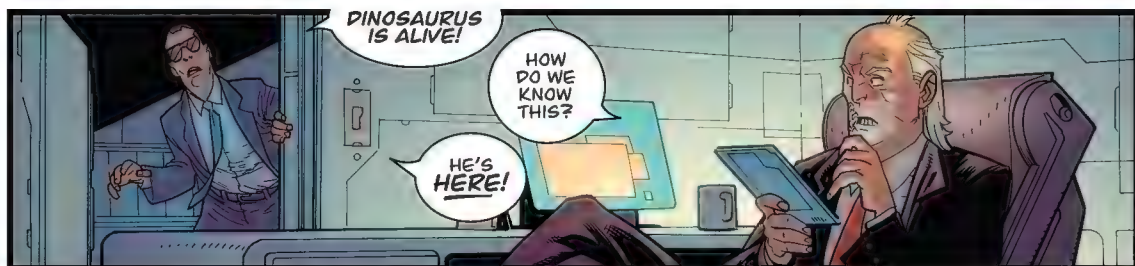
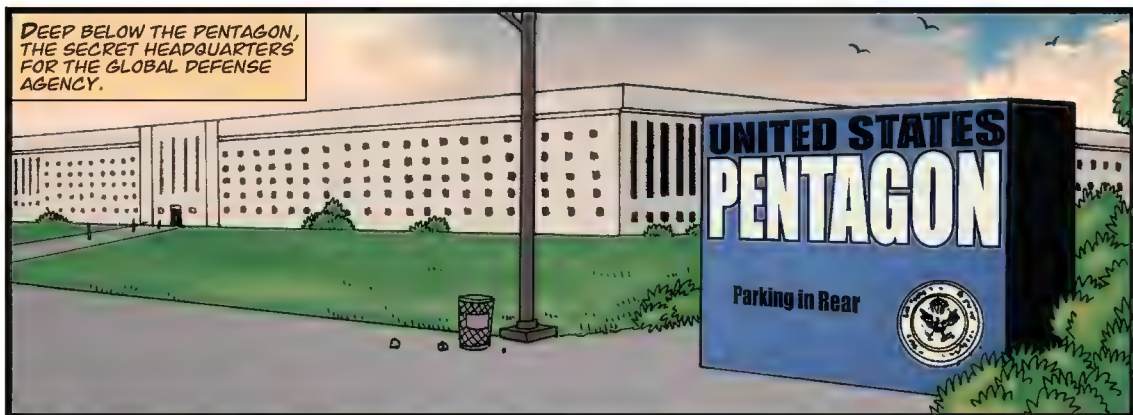
HE DOES?

REALLY?

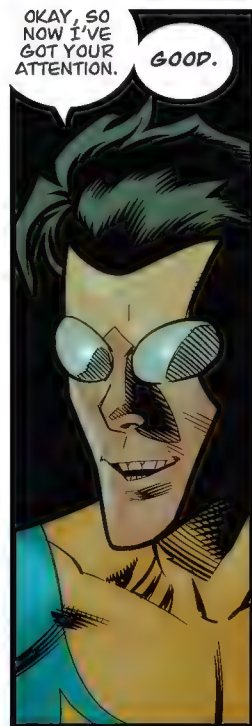
WEIRD.















OKAY, THE BOTTOM LINE IS THIS, I GET IT--YOUR WORLD IS IN DANGER, IT NEEDS POWER--YOU'VE GOT PEOPLE DYING. YOU'RE DESPERATE.

BUT YOU'RE HERE TO HELP PEOPLE, YOUR PEOPLE, BUT STILL-- IT COUNTS. WHAT I'M SAYING IS, YOU'RE NOT EVIL.

YOU'RE DESPERATE.



YOU JUST WANT TO SAVE YOUR PLANET... IF YOU COULD DO THAT WITHOUT HURTING ANYONE... YOU'D DO IT, RIGHT?



...



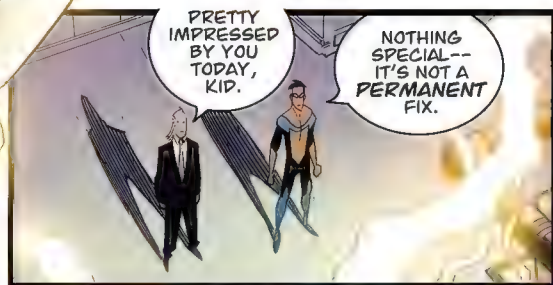
LET ME BE CLEAR. IF I COULD GET YOU SET FREE, AND ALSO SOMEHOW HELP YOU-- SO THAT YOU COULD GO BACK TO YOUR HOME WORLD...

WOULD YOU COOPERATE WITH ME, WITHOUT FIGHTING ME OR TRYING TO KILL ME... OR ANYONE ON THIS PLANET?



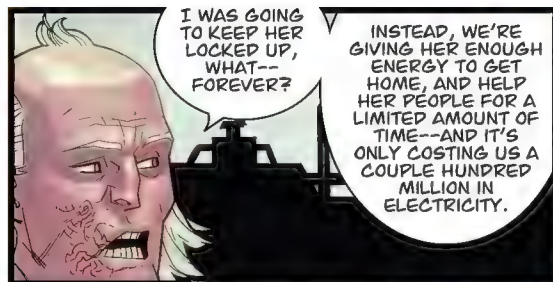
YES.





PRETTY IMPRESSED BY YOU TODAY, KID.

NOTHING SPECIAL-- IT'S NOT A PERMANENT FIX.



I WAS GOING TO KEEP HER LOCKED UP, WHAT-- FOREVER?

INSTEAD, WE'RE GIVING HER ENOUGH ENERGY TO GET HOME, AND HELP HER PEOPLE FOR A LIMITED AMOUNT OF TIME--AND IT'S ONLY COSTING US A COUPLE HUNDRED MILLION IN ELECTRICITY.



IT'S A SIMPLE PLAN. ROLLING BLACKOUTS ALL ACROSS THE COUNTRY IN TEN MINUTE INTERVALS, FEED HER THE JUICE INSTEAD.

DOESN'T HURT ANYONE-- JUST HELPS.

WELL, WE DIDN'T THINK OF IT. YOU DID.



YOUR PEOPLE WERE SCARED OF HER. THAT'S A PROBLEM.

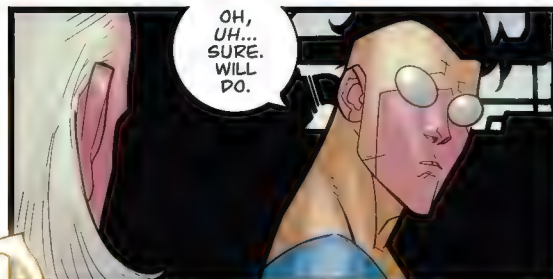
ANYWAY, LOOKS LIKE SHE'S ALMOST DONE, I'LL NEED TO ESCORT HER TO THE NEXT POWER STATION.



SURE, LISTEN. COME BY THE PENTAGON AFTER YOU'RE DONE WITH HER... I'D LIKE TO TALK TO YOU.

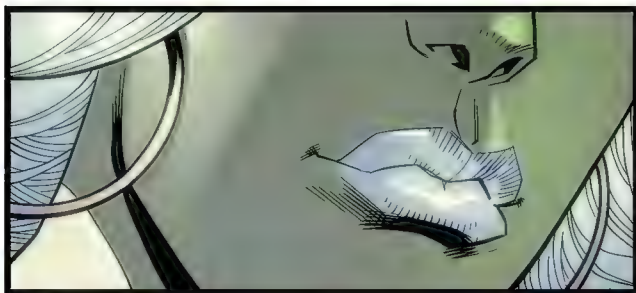
...

NOTHING SERIOUS.

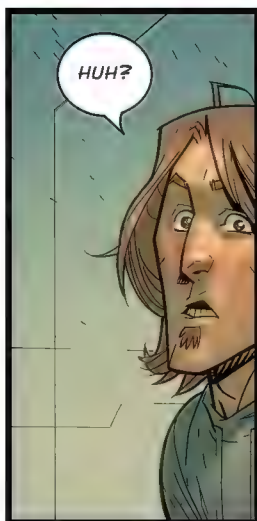
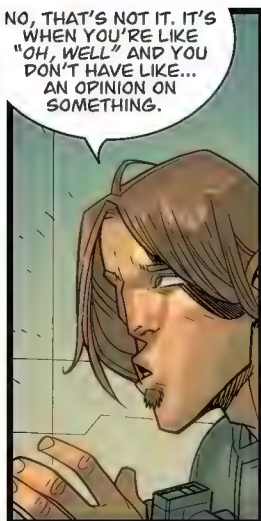
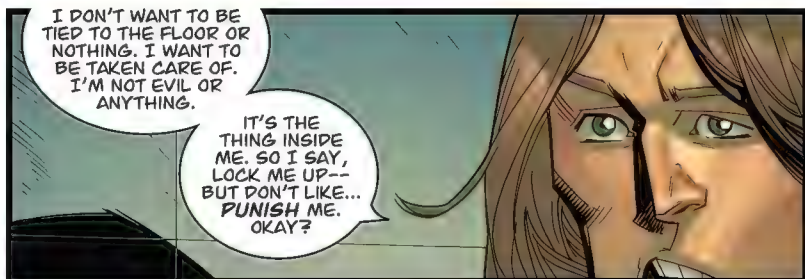
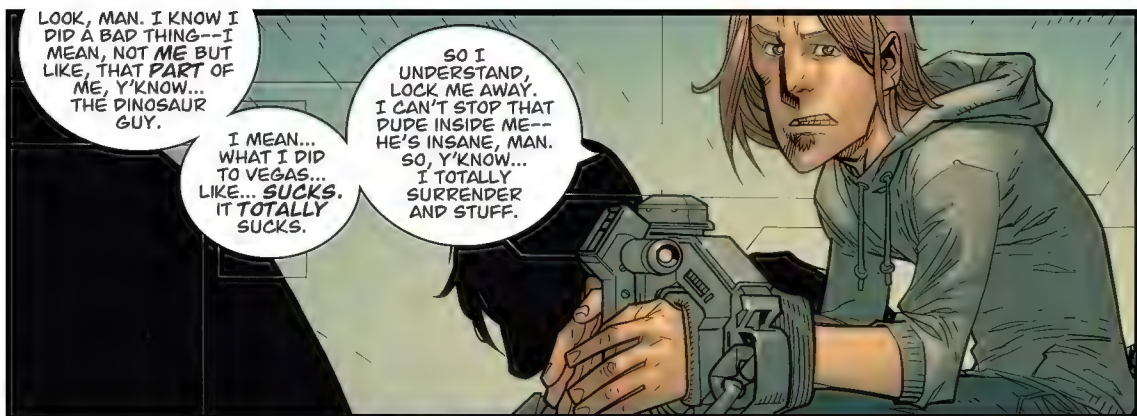


OH, UH... SURE. WILL DO.











THE GUARDIANS OF THE  
GLOBE CENTRAL BASE, UTAH.

I ACCEPTED, OF COURSE.  
IT REALLY IS A GOOD IDEA.  
IT'S DEFINITELY HOW I'D  
BE MOST USEFUL. IT'S  
REALLY A GLORIFIED  
DISPATCHER, BUT MY  
PRONES COULD BE  
ASSISTING IN  
BATTLE AS  
WELL.

I THINK IT  
WILL GIVE ME  
PURPOSE.

SOMETHING  
I REALLY MISSED  
WHEN WE WERE  
RULING  
THE FLAXAN  
EMPIRE.

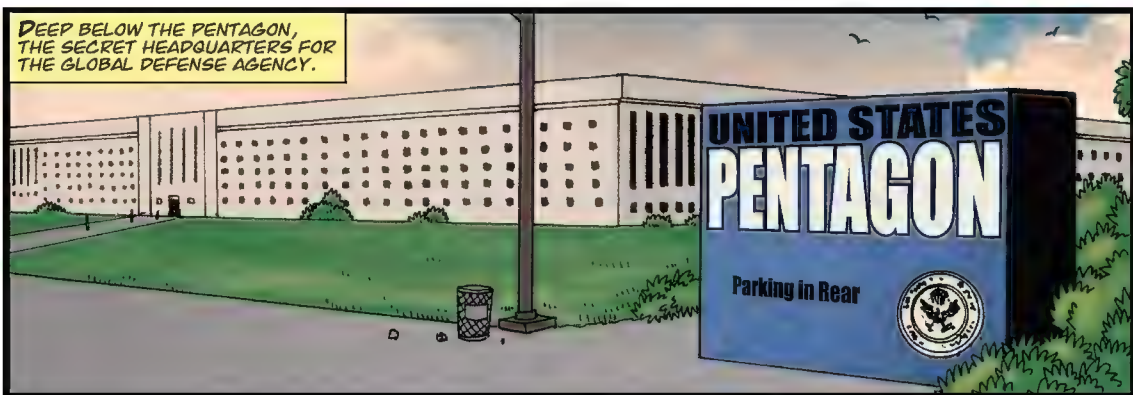
ARE YOU...  
ADJUSTING  
WELL?

EVERYTHING  
IS SO...  
DIFFERENT  
NOW...

YEAH.



DEEP BELOW THE PENTAGON,  
THE SECRET HEADQUARTERS FOR  
THE GLOBAL DEFENSE AGENCY.



MEETING IN  
THE WHITE  
ROOM? THIS  
IS NEVER  
A GOOD  
SIGN.



I THINK  
WE'RE PAST  
ALL THAT.  
RELAX, I  
JUST WANT  
TO TALK.

I BELIEVE  
YOU'VE BEEN  
BROUGHT UP TO  
SPEED ON THE  
VARIOUS THINGS THAT  
HAPPENED WHILE  
YOU WERE GONE... AND  
YOU'VE WITNESSED  
FIRST HAND JUST HOW  
BAD THINGS ARE  
OUT THERE.

YEAH. IT WAS ALWAYS  
DANGEROUS... BUT... I  
COULD STAND TO HAVE  
A FEW MORE BANK  
ROBBERS AND A LOT  
LESS DESTROYED  
CITIES...

NOT TO  
MAKE  
LIGHT OF  
THINGS...

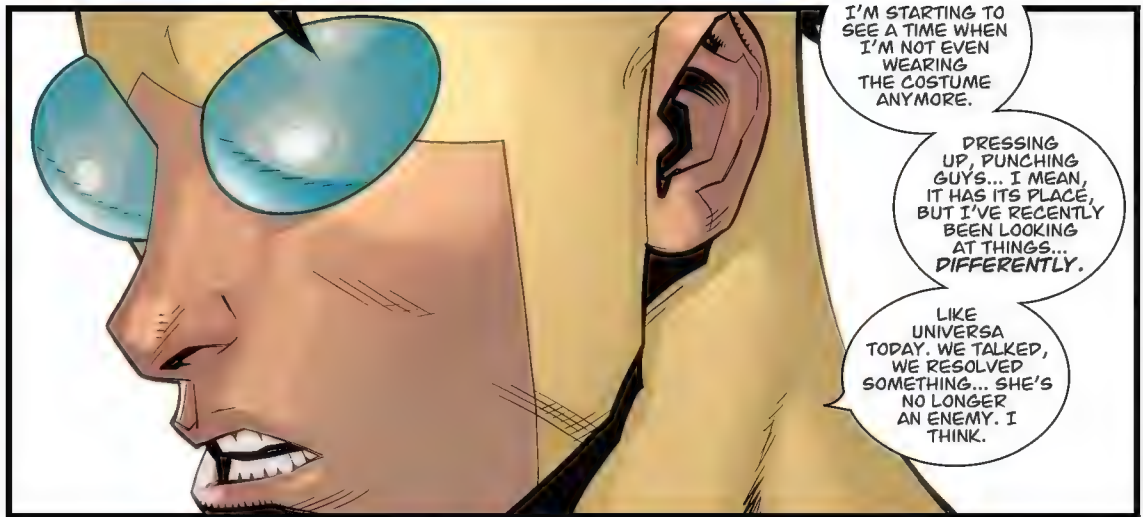
WHAT I'M GETTING AT,  
IS... I'D JUST LIKE TO  
KNOW IF I CAN COUNT  
ON YOU... IF I  
NEED YOU.

WE'VE  
HAD OUR  
DIFFERENCES IN  
THE PAST, BUT  
YOU KNOW I  
WOULDN'T TURN  
AWAY FROM A  
SITUATION WHERE  
I WAS  
NEEDED.

I'M NOT  
WEARING AN  
EARPiece ANY  
TIME SOON,  
THOUGH...  
IN FACT,  
I'VE BEEN  
THINKING...







I'M STARTING TO SEE A TIME WHEN I'M NOT EVEN WEARING THE COSTUME ANYMORE.

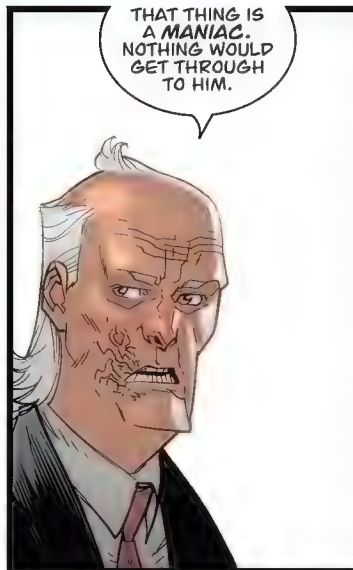
DRESSING UP, PUNCHING GUYS... I MEAN, IT HAS ITS PLACE, BUT I'VE RECENTLY BEEN LOOKING AT THINGS... DIFFERENTLY.

LIKE UNIVERSA TODAY. WE TALKED, WE RESOLVED SOMETHING... SHE'S NO LONGER AN ENEMY. I THINK.



THAT SEEMS SO MUCH **SMARTER** THAN... FIGHTING.

MAYBE IF I'D TRIED A DIFFERENT APPROACH WITH DINOSAURUS...



THAT THING IS A **MANIAC**. NOTHING WOULD GET THROUGH TO HIM.

HOW CAN YOU BE SO CERTAIN? EVERYONE **WANTS** SOMETHING... AND THESE GUYS ARE JUST TRYING TO GET IT.

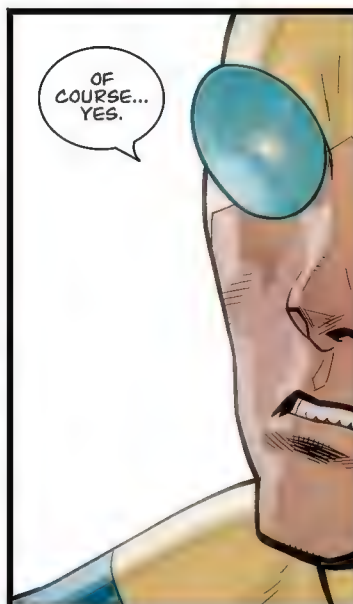
I DON'T AGREE WITH HIS METHODS, BUT FROM WHAT HE SAYS, DINOSAURUS THINKS HE'S ACTUALLY **HELPING** HUMANITY.

I THINK THERE MIGHT BE SOMETHING TO THAT...



THAT'S AN ARGUMENT FOR ANOTHER TIME, THEN.

SO, TO WRAP UP... I CAN COUNT ON YOU IF I NEED YOU?



OF COURSE... YES.



GOOD. NOW THAT WE'RE ON SPEAKING TERMS AGAIN, I FIGURE IT'S BEST TO JUST TELL YOU THINGS UP FRONT THAT I FEEL MIGHT UPSET YOU.

DON'T BE ALARMED, BUT...





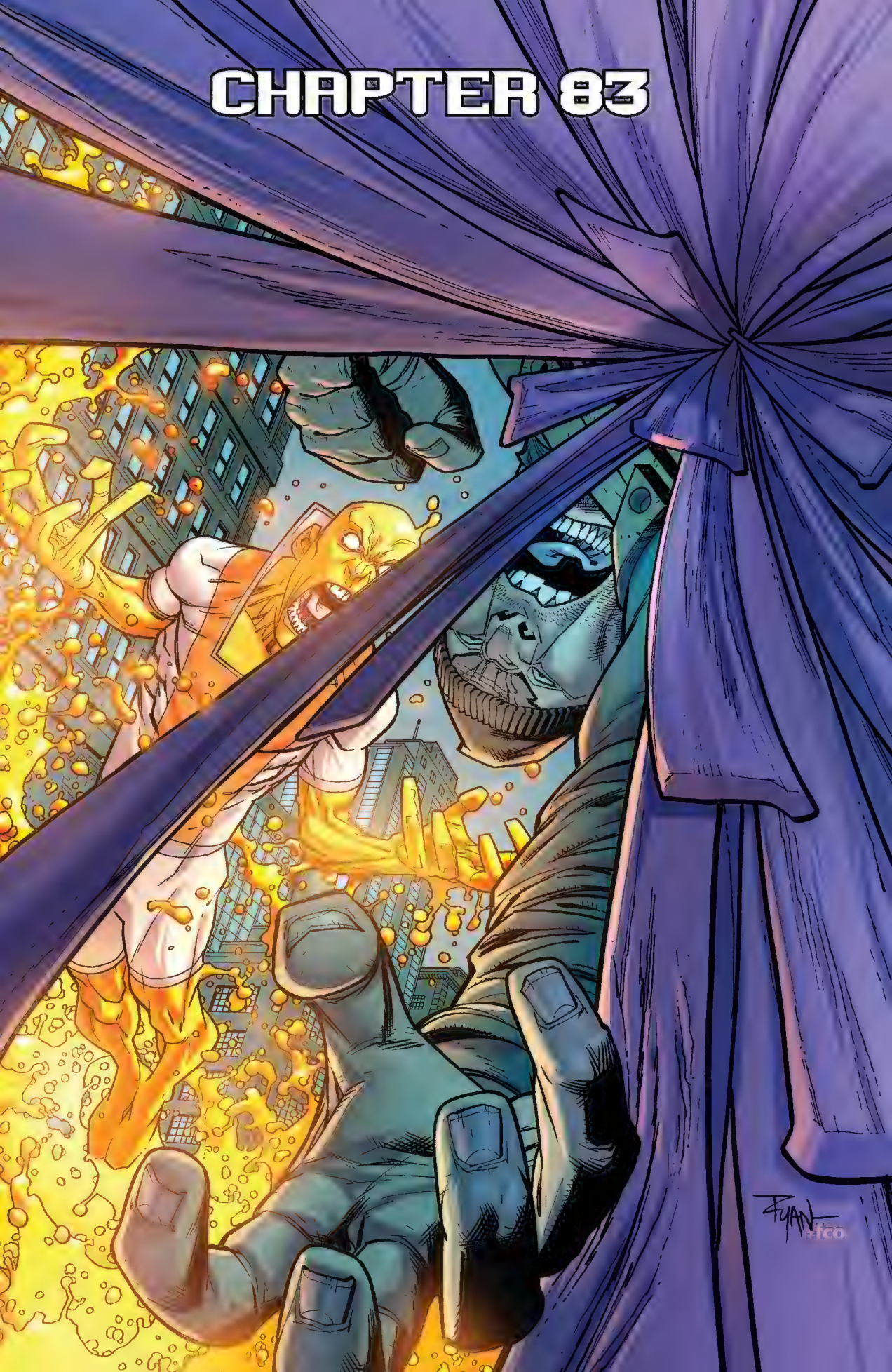
THERE  
ARE THINGS  
I'VE BEEN  
KEEPING  
FROM  
YOU...







# CHAPTER 83

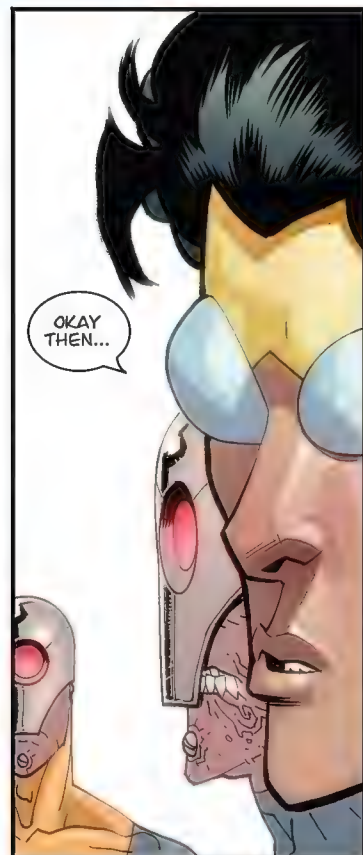


FYAN  
efco

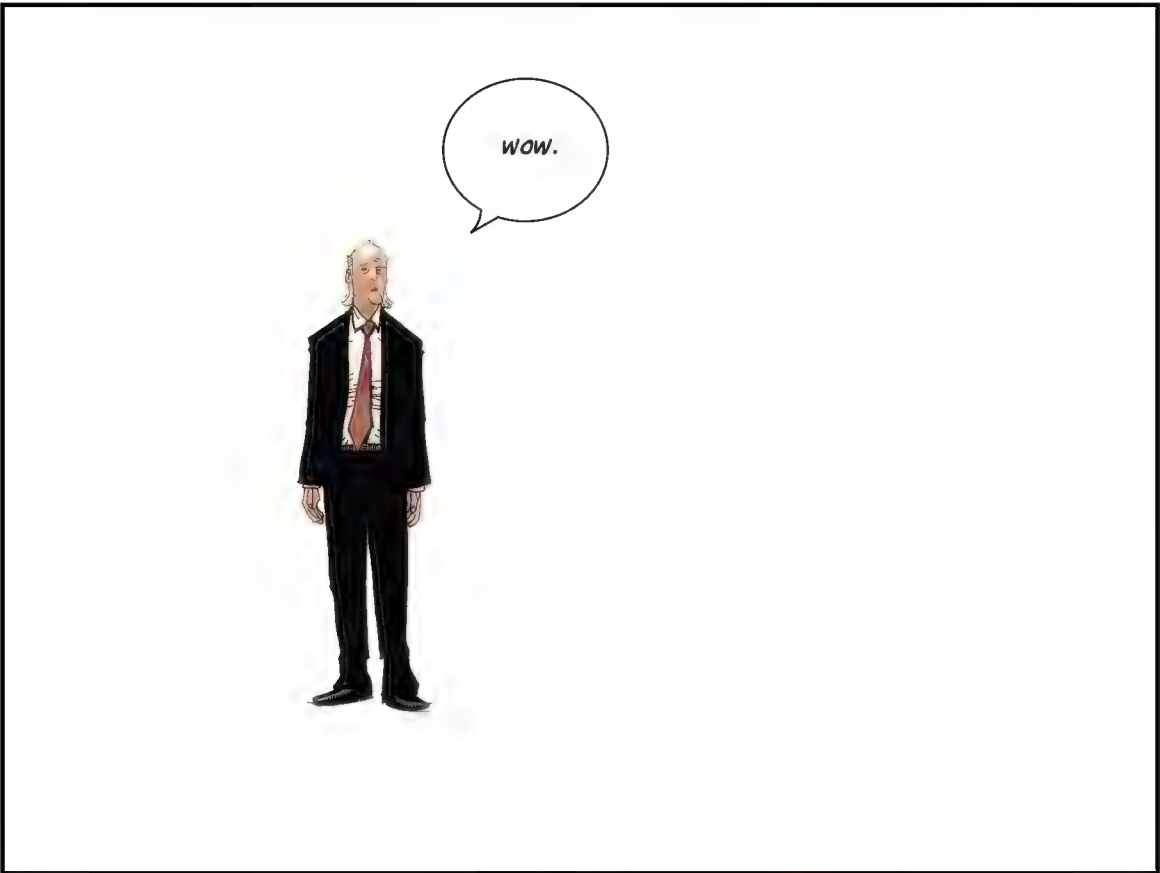
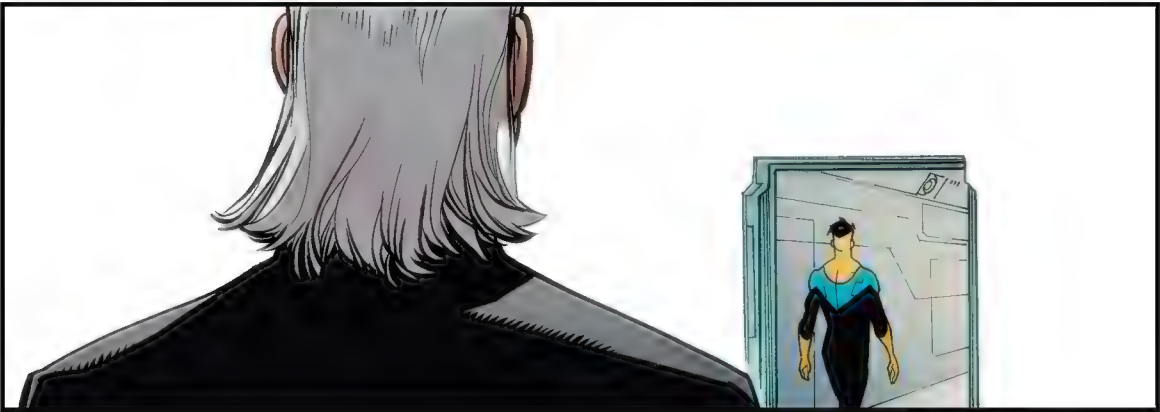














THE SECRET HEADQUARTERS OF CRIMINAL MASTERMIND, TITAN.

WE'VE TRIED EVERYTHING, BOSS.

WE'VE TRIED TO GO LEGIT... THAT DIDN'T WORK, WE JUST COULDN'T MAKE ENDS MEET.

WE TRIED TO GO BACK TO CRIME ON OUR OWN--WE COULDN'T HACK IT.

WORKING FOR MACHINE HEAD WAS NO GREAT SHAKES... BUT YOU WERE ONE OF US--A THUG, YOU KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE...

WORKING FOR YOU, IT'S BEEN EASIER. AND WE KNOW WE HAVEN'T BEEN THE MOST USEFUL PARTS OF YOUR ORGANIZATION...

IF YOU'LL ALLOW ME TO INTERRUPT YOUR RAMBLE...

YOU WISH TO PROVE YOUR WORTH. UNDERSTANDABLE. ADMIRABLE. THE TRUTH OF THE MATTER IS THAT I'M STILL TRYING TO REBUILD MY ORGANIZATION IN THE WAKE OF THE RECENT DEBACLE WITH THE ORDER.\*

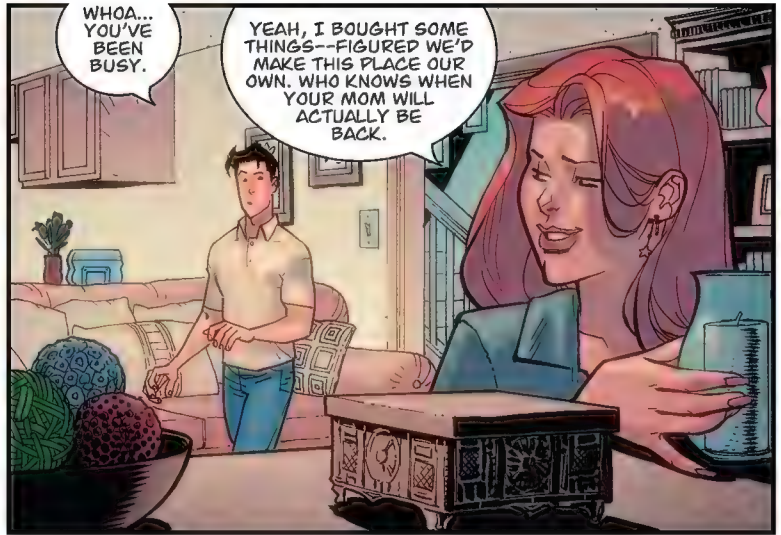
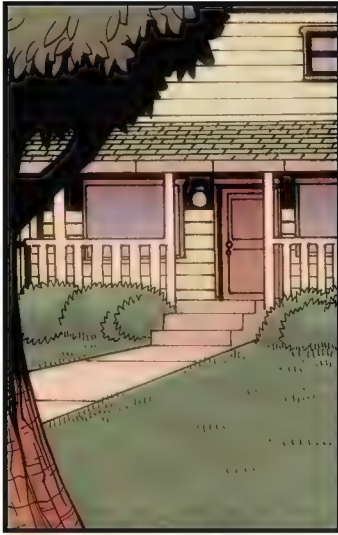
IT'S BROUGHT DOWN A LOT OF HEAT ON ME AND THIS ORGANIZATION.

\*SEE GUARDING THE GLOBE, VOLUME I.

SO WHAT I'M SAYING IS, THERE ARE MANY WAYS YOU COULD PROVE VERY VALUABLE TO ME.

WERE YOU WILLING TO TAKE THINGS TO THE NEXT LEVEL... IN FACT, I THINK I KNOW JUST THE TASK WITH WHICH TO PROVE YOURSELVES.









AND YOU'VE BEEN GONE FOR TWELVE YEARS FROM YOUR PERSPECTIVE?

YOU RULED THE FLAXAN EMPIRE FOR A TIME--THAT'S IMPRESSIVE.

YOUR TIME AWAY HAS CERTAINLY, UM... BENEFITED YOU...

THAT'S RIGHT, BOYS. TWELVE YEARS AWAY... SOME OF YOU I BARELY REMEMBER, SOME OF YOU I DON'T REMEMBER...

...AND TAKE NOTE--THE WOMAN YOU SEE BEFORE YOU HAS A BRAIN THAT'S OVER FORTY YEARS OLD.

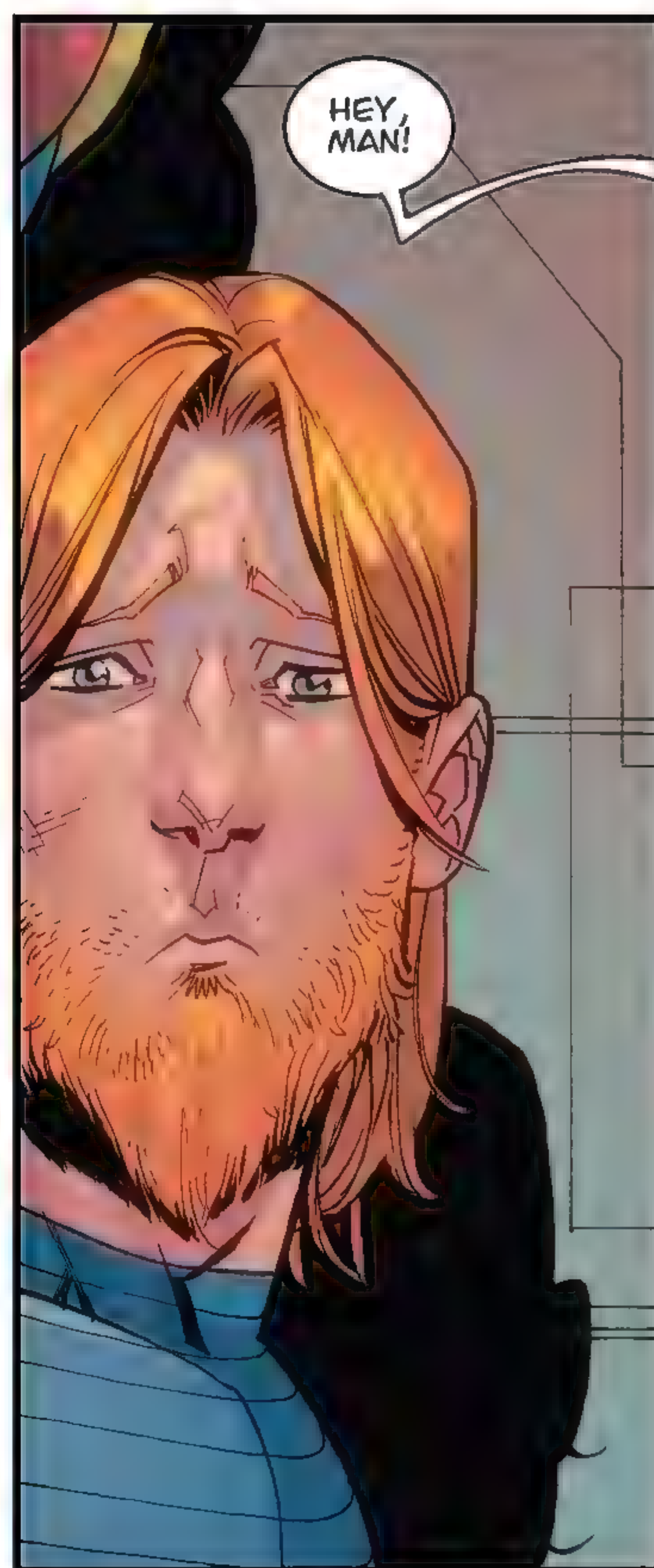
THERE ARE PARTS OF YOUR CLOTHES WHERE THERE ARE NO CLOTHES AND WE CAN SEE YOUR SKIN INSTEAD.

UGH. DO THEY STILL MAKE CIGARETTES?



SORRY, REX. I'M GOING AFTER MY FIANCE BEFORE HE TACKLES HER.

THAT'LL GET AT LEAST ONE GUY TO GIVE HER SOME SPACE...



HEY, MAN!



BYE!

IT'S GOOD TO HAVE YOU BACK.

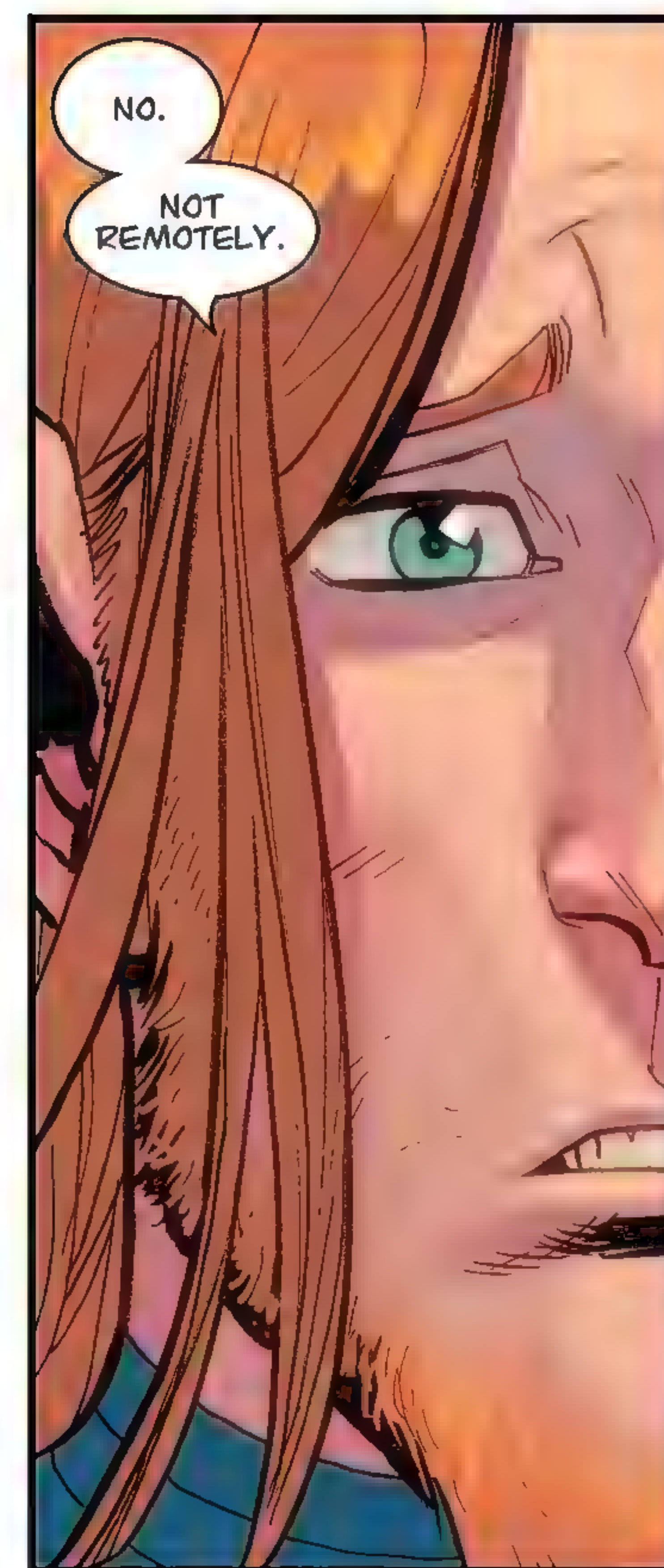


I GOTTA ADMIT, I REALLY MISSED HAVING YOU AROUND. I KNOW WE WERE NEVER THAT CLOSE, BUT--

HEY.



EVERYTHING OKAY BETWEEN YOU AND MONSTER GIRL?



NO. NOT REMOTELY.





I'M GOING TO GO STAKE OUT THEIR PLACE--IT'S LIKE A FORTRESS. FOR THE RECORD, I'M NOT COMFORTABLE WITH THIS, TITAN REALLY IS ASKING FOR THE MOON... WHY WOULD HE SEND JUST US?

TO AVOID RETALIATION. HE WANTS US TO LOOK LIKE ROGUE AGENTS-- LIKE HE'S NOT BEHIND IT. HE DOESN'T THINK WE'LL PULL IT OFF.

BUT WE WILL... I'D COME WITH YOU, BUT I REALLY NEED TO SEPARATE-- I'VE BEEN BONDED TOO LONG.

I GET IT, MAN. AT LEAST... CLEAN UP A LITTLE OR SOMETHING WHILE I'M OUT.



HE'S GONE. YEAH. HE KNOWS YOU'RE ALIVE, THOUGH. WE DON'T KEEP SECRETS FROM EACH OTHER.

I DON'T KNOW WHY YOU WON'T TALK TO ME IN FRONT OF HIM--I KNOW YOU DON'T LIKE HIM, BUT IT'S NOT LIKE HE'S GOING TO HEAR YOU.

I KNOW... BUT THAT'S NOT WHAT I WANT. I KNOW A PERMANENT BOND WOULD MAKE ME STRONGER-- MAYBE EVEN HELP US PULL THIS OFF, BUT YOU'VE SAID IT WOULD... **TRANSFORM ME.**

I TRUST YOU... WE'VE BEEN TOGETHER FOR YEARS... BUT I JUST DON'T LIKE THE SOUND OF THAT.



NO, OKAY? I'VE MADE UP MY MIND.

PLEASE... DON'T BRING IT UP AGAIN.

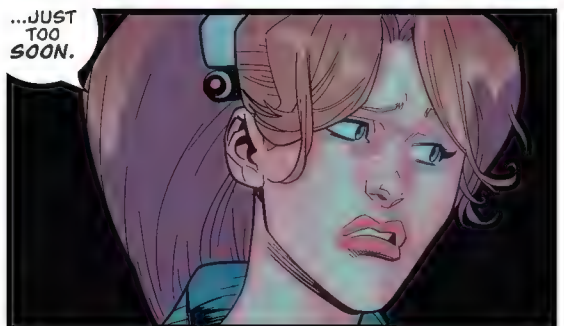
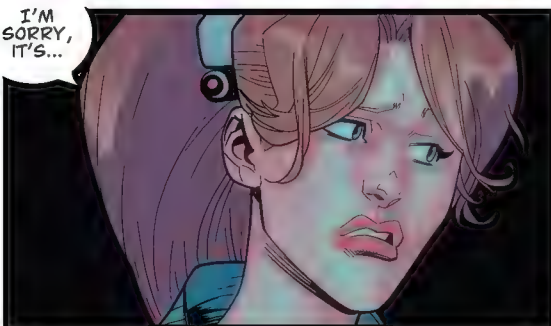
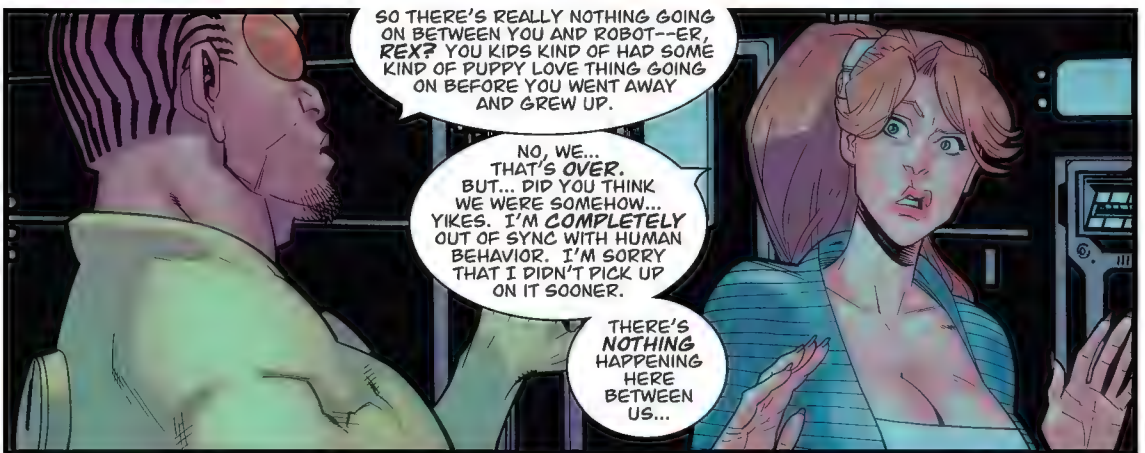


OH, CALM DOWN.

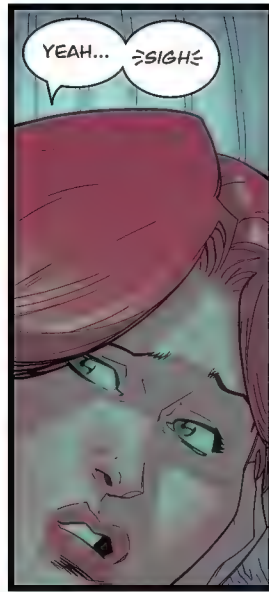
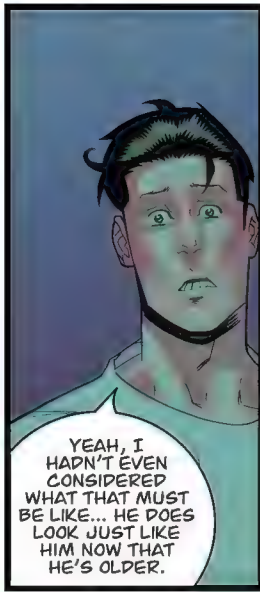
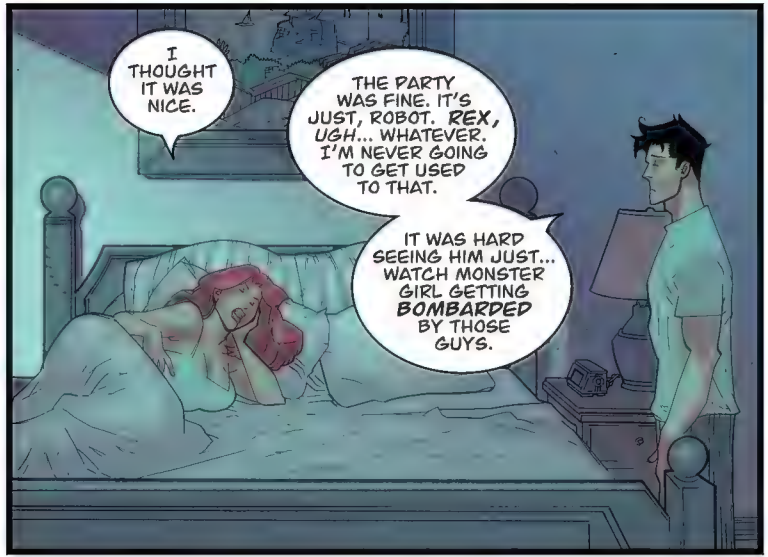
IT'S OKAY-- IT'LL JUST BE FOR A LITTLE WHILE.







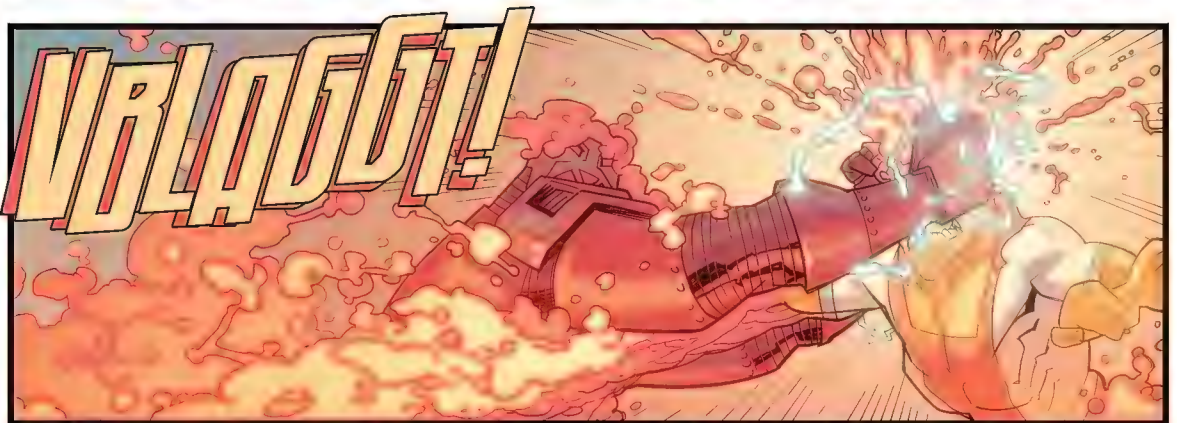
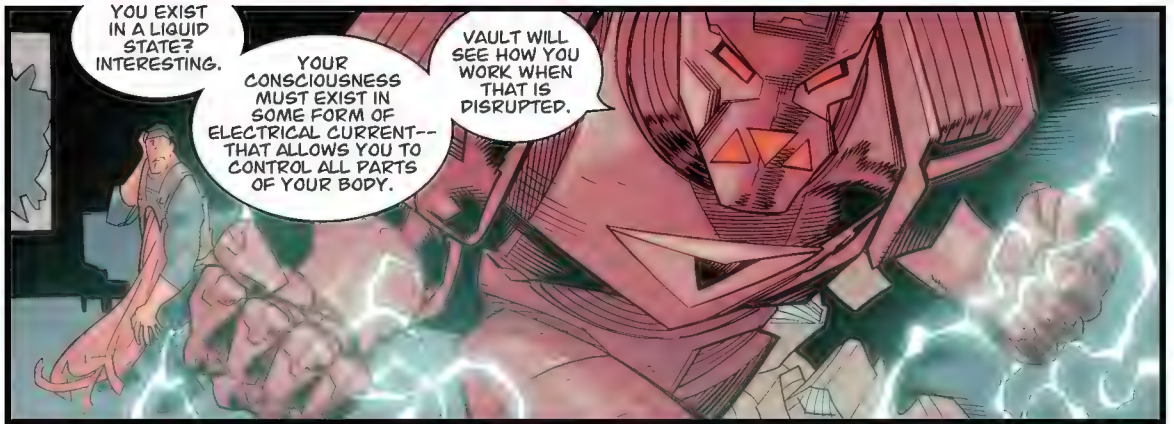
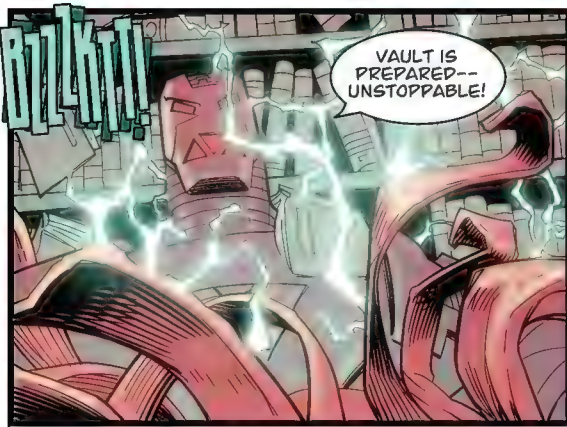




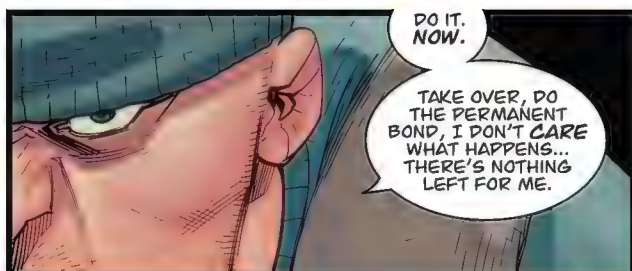














WAIT--  
WHAT IS  
THIS?!

WHERE  
AM I?  
ARE YOU  
HERE?

DID WE  
BOND? DID  
YOU TAKE  
OVER?  
DID...

DID  
I DIE,  
TOO?



JAMES...  
HOW COULD  
I LET--

...



IF YOU  
CAN HEAR  
ME--I DON'T  
WANT THIS! I  
TAKE IT BACK! I  
DON'T WANT  
YOU TO TAKE  
OVER.



HELLO?!

I'M  
SERIOUS!!

IF YOU'RE  
OUT THERE--  
IF YOU CAN HEAR  
ME! I WANT MY  
BODY BACK! I  
DEMAND YOU  
GIVE IT TO  
ME!

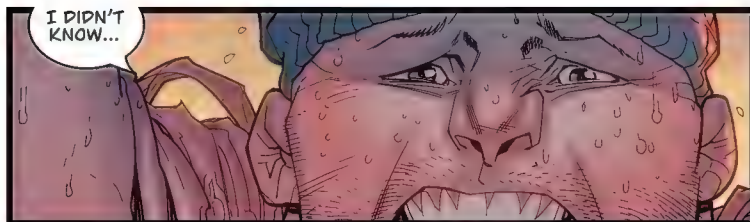


I  
WANT--!!

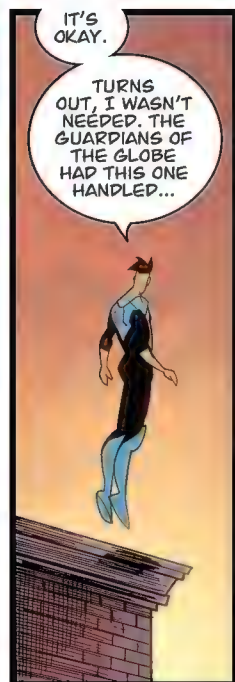
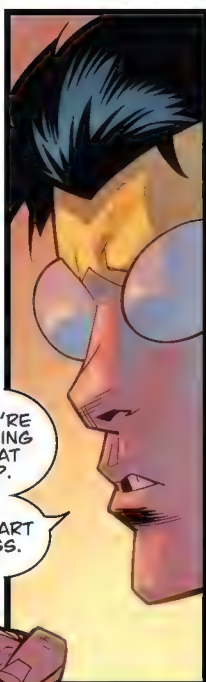
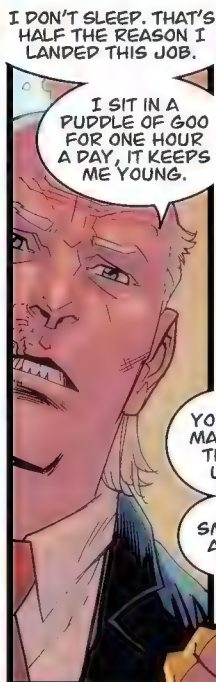
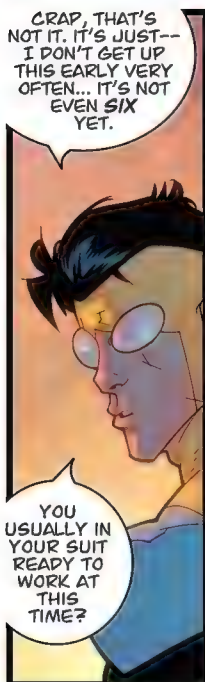
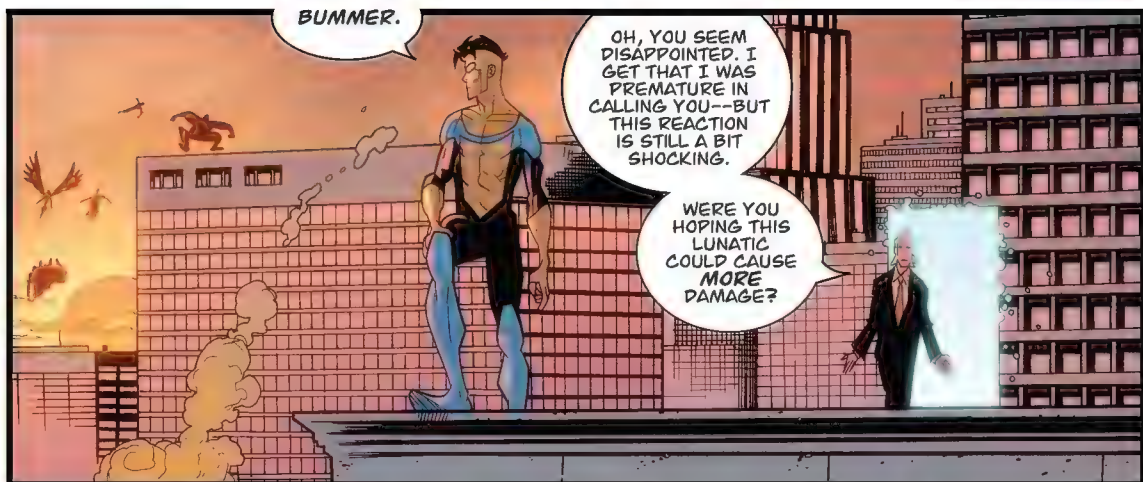




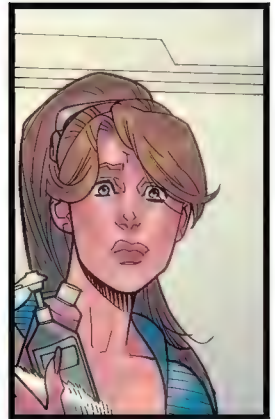
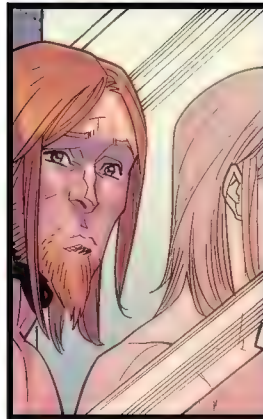
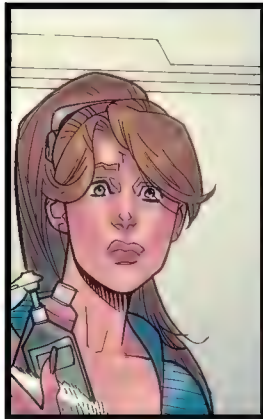
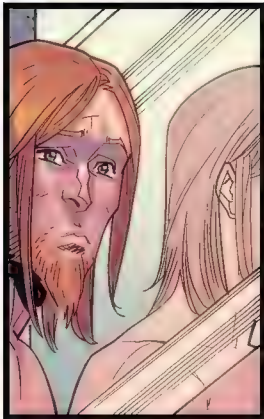
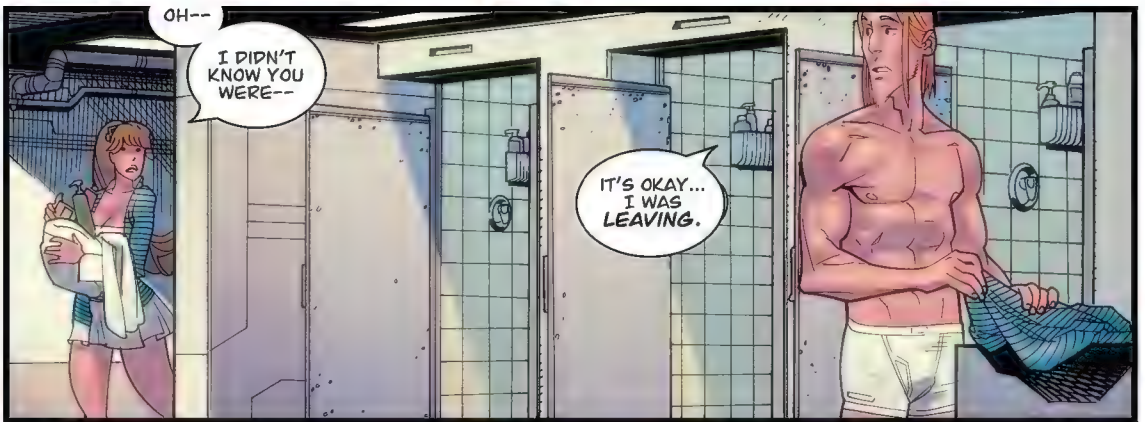
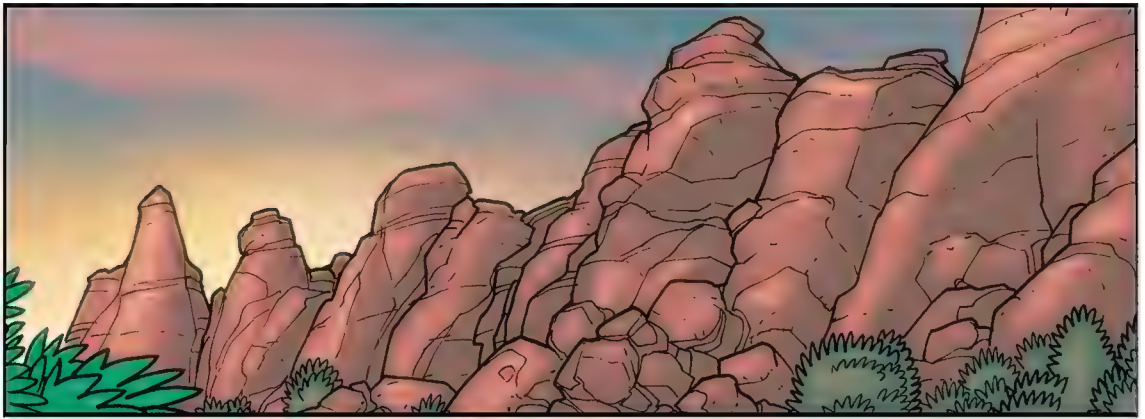




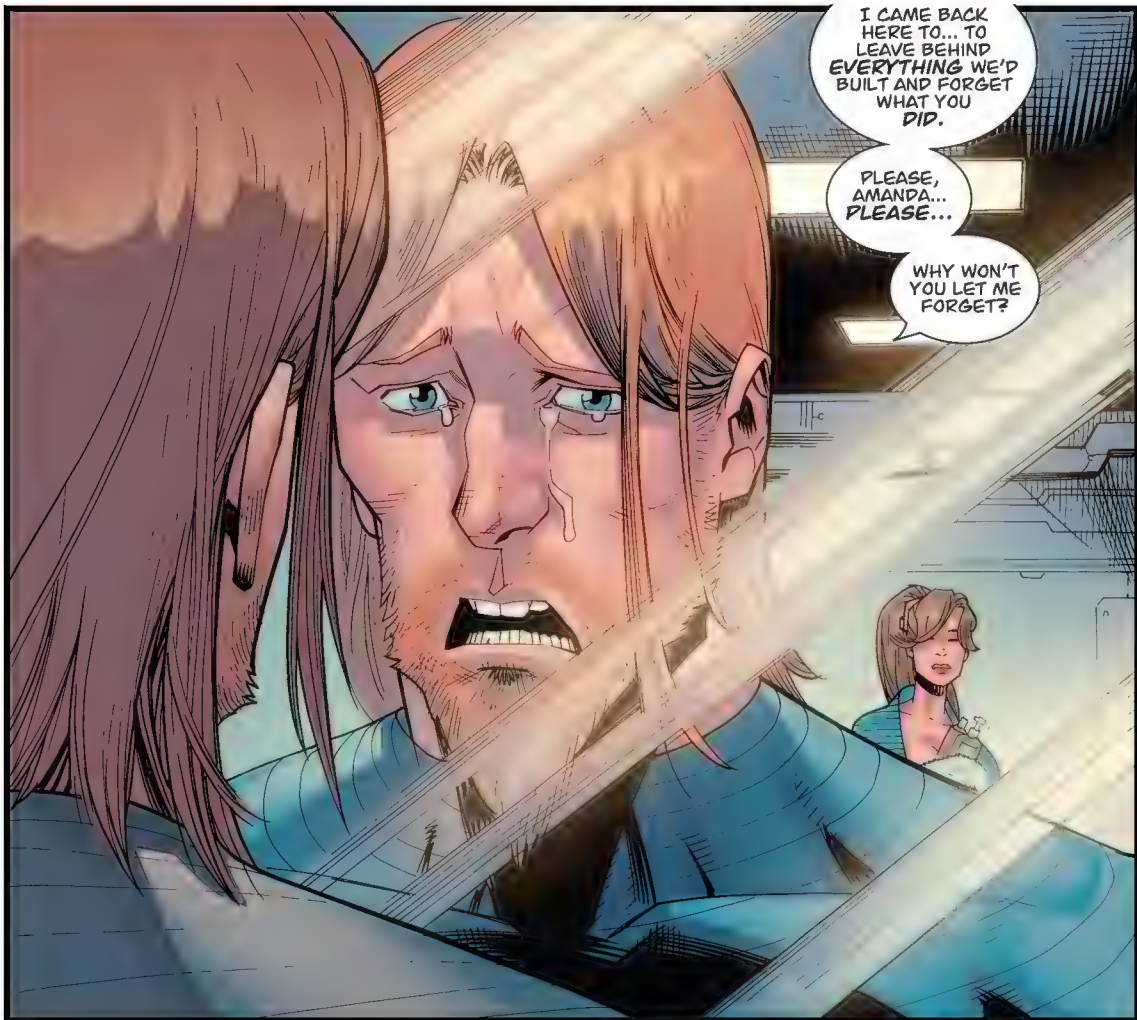
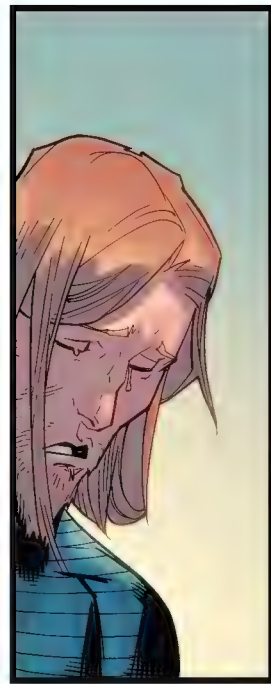
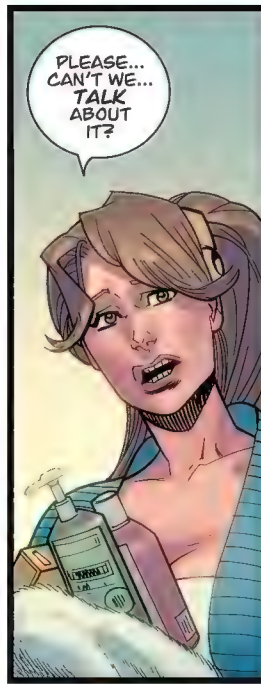
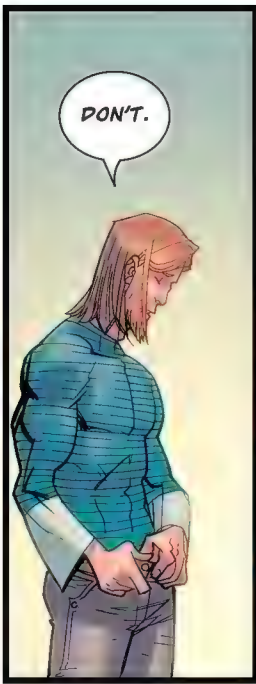
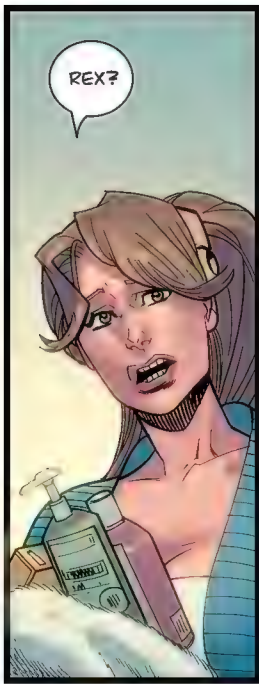
















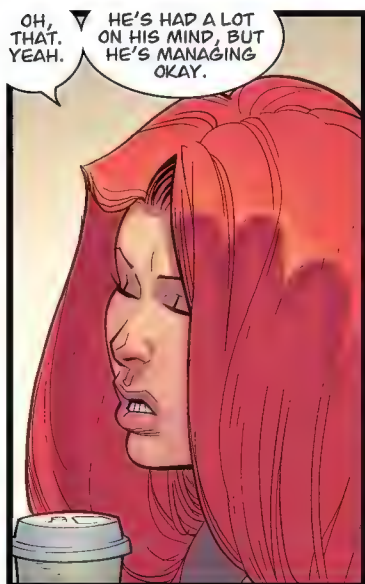
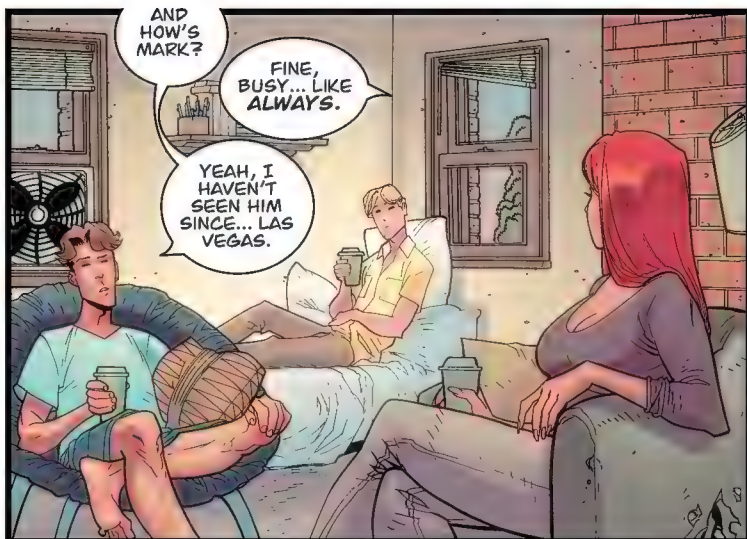


# CHAPTER 84



Puam II









WHY DID YOU CALL ME HERE?

I KNOW THIS HAS BEEN GRATING ON YOU, THE DESTRUCTION OF LAS VEGAS... SO I THOUGHT IT WOULD HELP FOR YOU TO SEE THAT **SOME** GOOD HAS COME FROM THIS.

ARE THOSE... SOLAR PANELS?

YES. THERE AREN'T ENOUGH RESOURCES TO REBUILD-- WE'RE INCAPABLE OF STARTING THIS CITY OVER FROM SCRATCH.

ALSO, SOME PEOPLE IN THE GOVERNMENT FEEL IT WOULD BE DISRESPECTFUL.

SO YOU'RE GOING TO FOLLOW THAT MANIAC'S PLAN AND COVER THE AREA WITH SOLAR PANELS?

YEAH, IT'S AMAZING! YOU CAN THANK THIS GUY HERE FOR MAKING IT ALL WORK.

OH, I BARELY DID ANYTHING.

ARE YOU KIDDING? THIS GUY HERE BASICALLY INVENTED A DOUBLE-SIDED SOLAR PANEL THAT CAN UTILIZE THE MIRRORED SURFACE OF THE TERRAIN HERE.

HIS SOLAR PANELS ABSORB NEARY **TWICE** AS MUCH SOLAR ENERGY AS STANDARD PANELS.

WHAT A GREAT FIND CHRIS HAS TURNED OUT TO BE. GOOD JOB THERE, INVINCIBLE.

WITH THE WORK HE AND SINCLAIR ARE DOING, THIS SOLAR PANEL ARRAY WILL PROVIDE CHEAP, CLEAN ENERGY FOR NEARLY **HALF** OF THE CITIZENS IN THIS COUNTRY.

AND ITS CONSTRUCTION IS A PUBLIC WORKS PROJECT THAT IS EMPLOYING **THOUSANDS**.

WHOA...



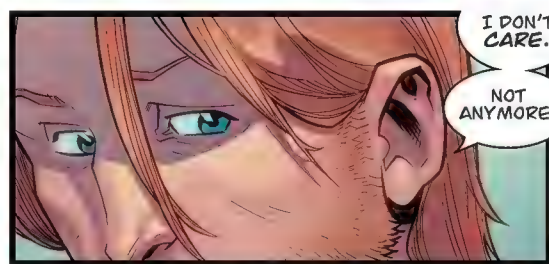
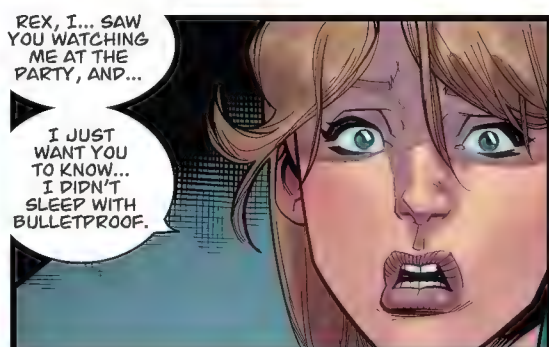
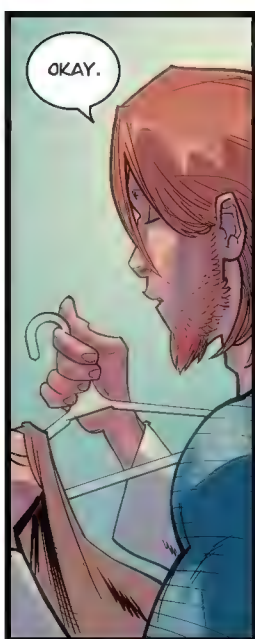
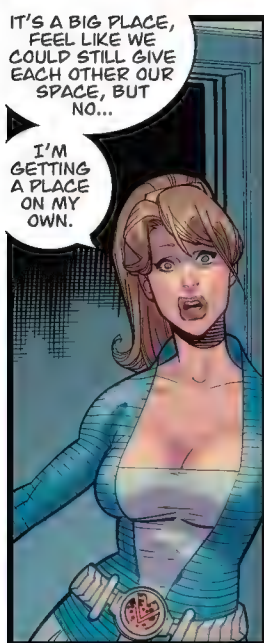
...DINOSAURUS  
WAS RIGHT.

WHAT  
WAS  
THAT?

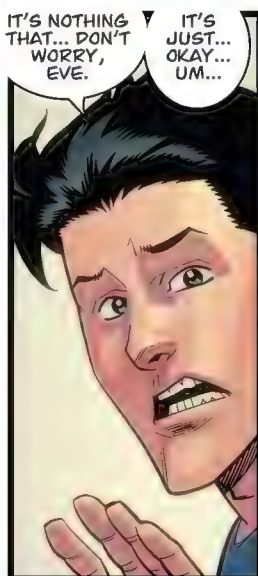
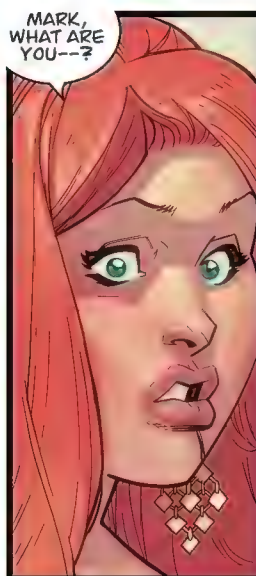
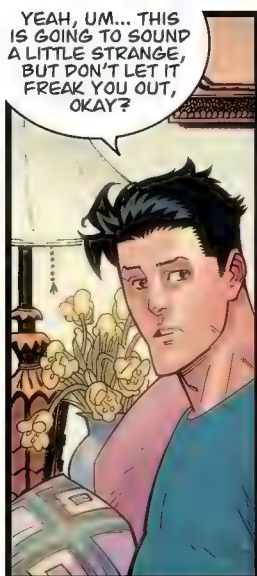
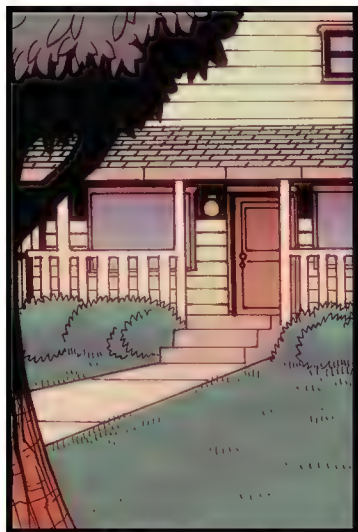
NOTHING...



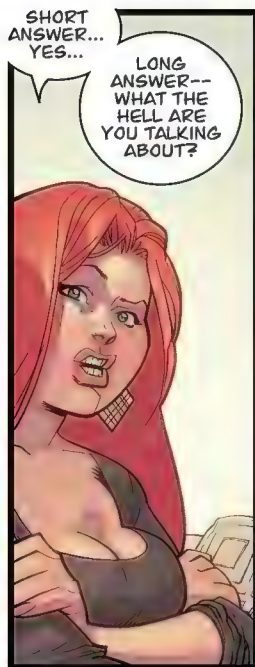




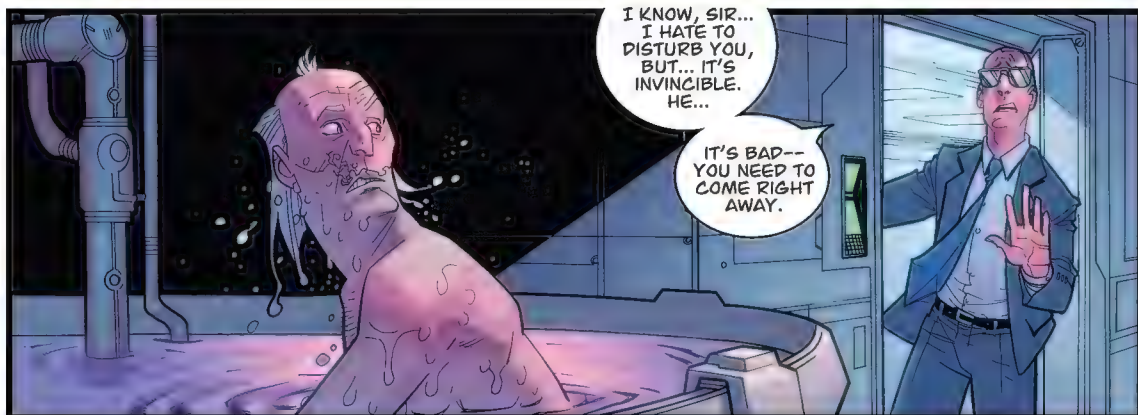
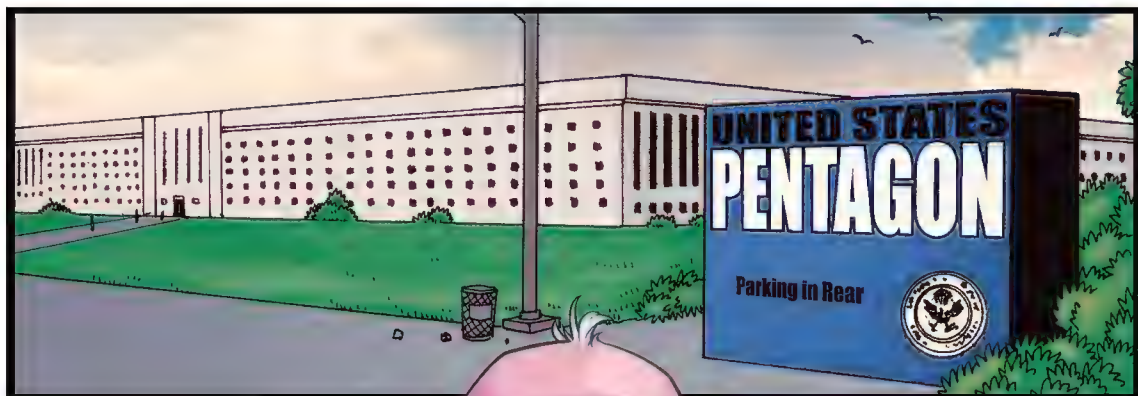






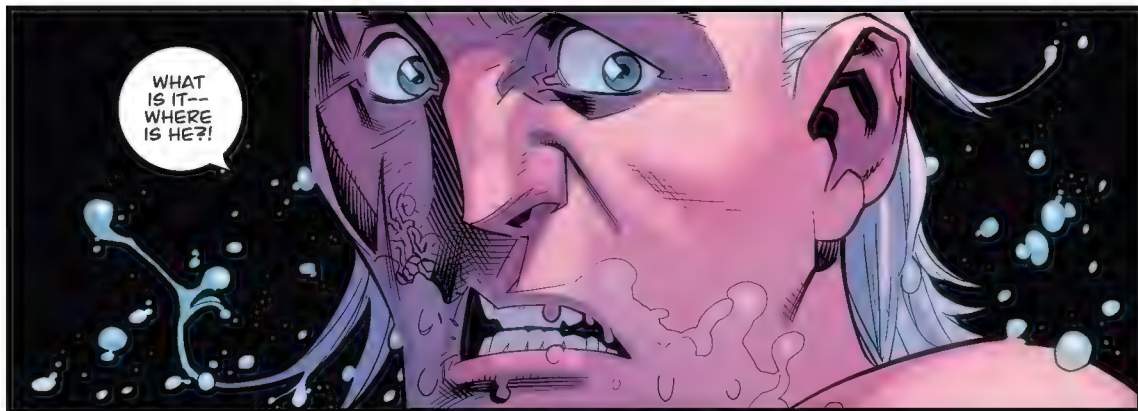






I KNOW, SIR...  
I HATE TO  
DISTURB YOU,  
BUT... IT'S  
INVINCIBLE.  
HE...

IT'S BAD--  
YOU NEED TO  
COME RIGHT  
AWAY.



WHAT  
IS IT--  
WHERE  
IS HE?!



UM...  
ARE YOU,  
LIKE--  
HERE  
TO KILL  
ME?

NO, I'M...  
HERE  
TO **SAVE**  
YOU.







SAVE ME FROM WHAT?

LIKE, I'M TOTALLY SAFE HERE, MAN.



THAT'S WHAT THEY WANT YOU TO THINK. I'M HERE TO BRING OUT YOUR DINOSAURUS FORM-- BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE.

SO... WHAT TURNS YOU, DO I NEED TO MAKE YOU MAD OR SOMETHING?



NO, IT'S INTERFERENCE... THAT'S WHAT MAKES ME TURN.

WHAT?

Y'KNOW... NOT CARING ABOUT SOMETHING... THAT'S WHY THEY HAVE ALL THIS STUFF IN HERE-- TO KEEP ME, LIKE... INTERESTED IN THINGS AT ALL TIMES.



YOU MEAN INDIFFERENCE?

YEAH, MAN-- THAT'S IT. WHAT YOU SAID.

YOU GOTTA MAKE ME NOT CARE ABOUT SOMETHING BEFORE THEY GET IN HERE! SAVE ME!

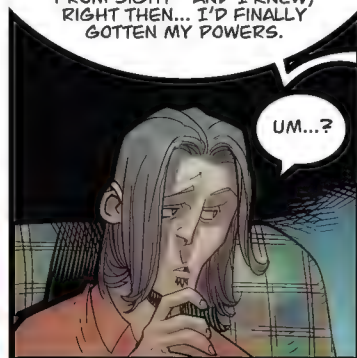
WHEN I WAS LIKE... EIGHT YEARS OLD, MY DAD SAT ME DOWN... FOR Y'KNOW, THE TALK. THE TALK WHERE HE EXPLAINS THAT HE'S A SUPERHERO AND THAT SOME DAY YOU'RE GOING TO INHERIT HIS POWERS. SO, FROM THAT POINT ON, I WAS JUST SORT OF COUNTING THE DAYS UNTIL MY POWERS KICKED IN... I WAS EXCITED AT FIRST, BUT AFTER A WHILE, I JUST STOPPED THINKING ABOUT IT. I KIND OF GAVE UP.

BY THE TIME I WAS SEVENTEEN I HAD A PART TIME JOB AT BURGER MART, WHICH WAS JUST AS BAD AS YOU'D IMAGINE. I'D LONG SINCE GIVEN UP ON GETTING POWERS. BUT ONE DAY, AFTER WORK, I WAS TAKING THE TRASH OUT--DRAGGING TWO BIG BAGS. LIKE EVERY DAY I'D DONE IT BEFORE, I USED ALL MY MIGHT--IN THE HOPES THAT THE BAG WOULD MAKE IT UP INTO THE DUMPSTER. AFTER I THREW IT, IT SOARED HIGH INTO THE AIR, DISAPPEARING FROM SIGHT--AND I KNEW, RIGHT THEN... I'D FINALLY GOTTEN MY POWERS.

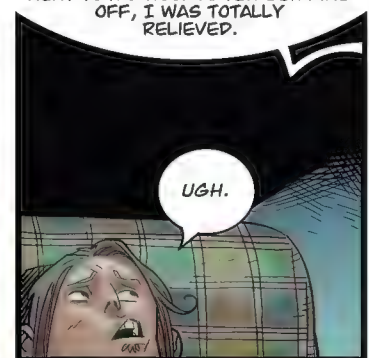
LATER THAT NIGHT, I WAS ON MY ROOF. YOU SEE, ASIDE FROM THE SUPER-STRENGTH THAT ALLOWED ME TO SLING THAT TRASH BAG TO SPACE MY FATHER ALSO POSSESSED THE ABILITY TO FLY. SO I THOUGHT, JUMPING OFF THE ROOF WOULD REALLY BE A GOOD WAY TO FORCE MYSELF TO NATURALLY LEARN THAT ABILITY. I WAS ONLY ONE STORY UP, SO THE FALL WOULDN'T HURT ME TOO BAD. I WAS PLAYING IT SAFE, STILL--WHEN I NOTICED I WAS ACTUALLY HOVERING NEXT TO MY ROOF AFTER JUMPING OFF, I WAS TOTALLY RELIEVED.



WAIT, WHAT ARE YOU--?

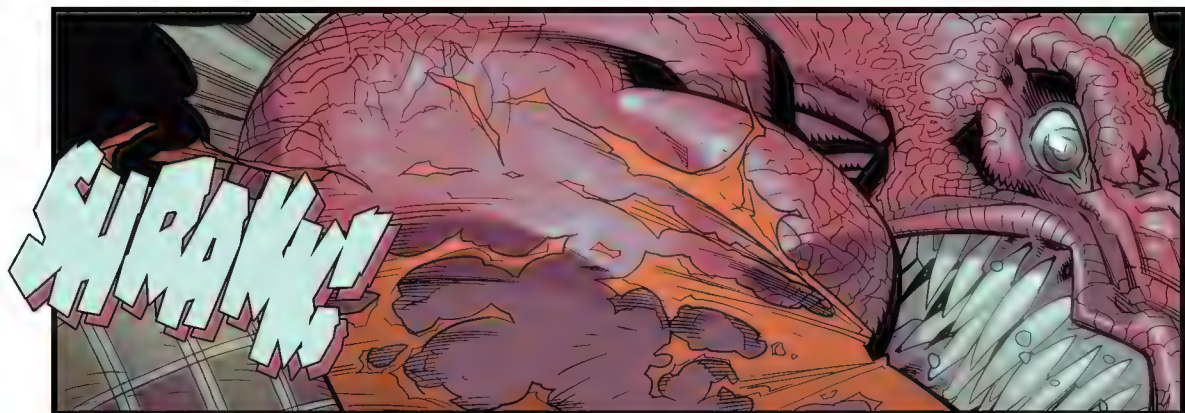


UM...?



UGH.





THEY ACTUALLY  
HAD ME CONTAINED,  
THERE WAS LITTLE  
HOPE OF ME  
ESCAPING MY  
FRAIL, PATHETIC,  
ALTERED  
FORM.

YOU'RE SMART  
ENOUGH TO KNOW  
THAT. YOU'RE  
SMART ENOUGH TO NOT  
TO DO THIS SIMPLY  
TO PICK A FIGHT  
WITH ME...

...SO AS  
UNBELIEVABLE  
AS IT MAY SOUND,  
THE MOST LOGICAL  
EXPLANATION IS  
THAT YOU'VE COME  
AROUND TO MY WAY  
OF THINKING AND  
ARE HERE TO  
HELP ME...

BUT  
THAT'S  
INSANE...  
RIGHT?

WELL...





I HAVE TO ADMIT, YOUR METHODS ARE INEXCUSABLE... TO THE POINT THAT IT'S... **HARD** TO JUST STAND HERE AND TALK TO YOU.

YOU'VE KILLED SO MANY PEOPLE, DESTROYED HOMES... AN ENTIRE CITY...



ALL WORTHY SACRIFICES FOR THE GREATER GOOD.

AS I RECALL, WHEN YOUR FATHER ATTEMPTED TO TAKE OVER THIS PLANET, YOU FOUGHT HIM-- AND IN THE PROCESS SOME LIVES WERE LOST.

WHAT I DID WAS NO DIFFERENT.



IT WASN'T REMOTELY-- NO, THIS ISN'T THE TIME FOR THIS. WHAT I'M GETTING AT-- WHAT I'M HERE FOR...

I'VE BEEN DOING THIS, BEING INVINCIBLE FOR A WHILE NOW, AND I HAVE THESE POWERS AND I DO WHAT I DO... TO USE THEM TO HELP PEOPLE.

I LOOK BACK AFTER ALL THIS TIME AND I THINK... WELL, I DON'T KNOW THAT I AM, Y'KNOW... HELPING PEOPLE-- MAKING THE WORLD **BETTER**... AND I FEEL LIKE THAT'S WHAT I SHOULD BE DOING.

I'M MAINTAINING THE STATUS QUO AT BEST, PUTTING OUT FIRES...



MY SOLAR PANEL ARRAY IS BEING BUILT, ISN'T IT? CHEAP ENERGY FOR THE MASSES... A BETTER LIFE FOR SOME. SMALL... BUT A DIFFERENCE.

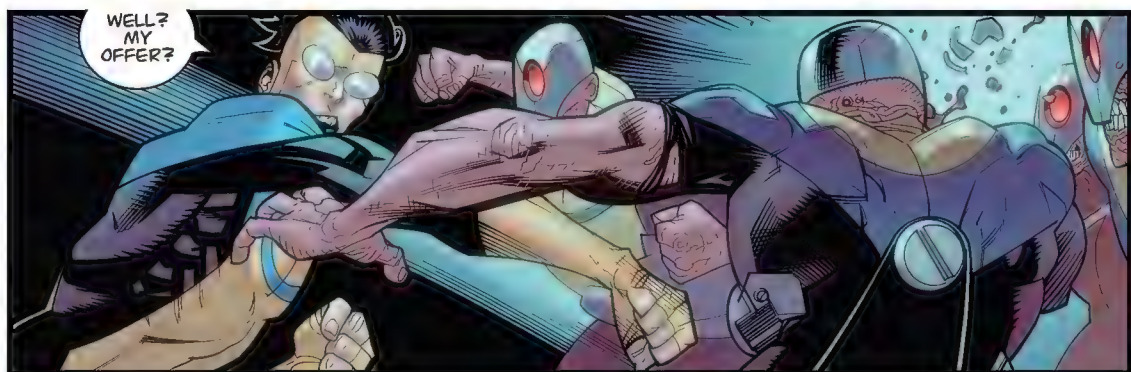
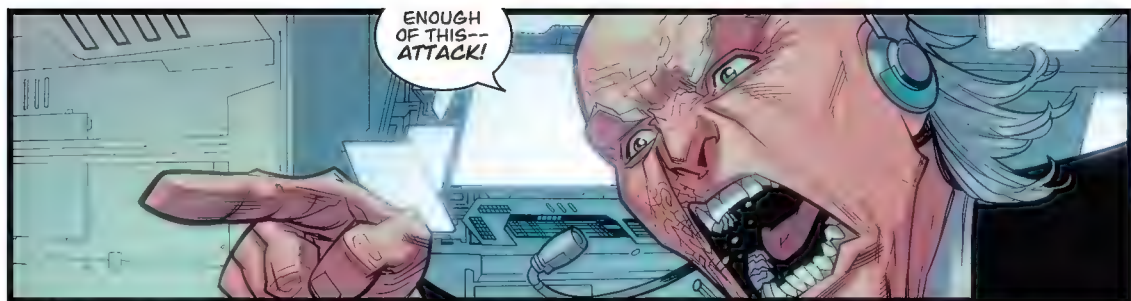
MUCH BETTER THAN SAVING A BRIDGE OR PUNCHING A BANK ROBBER, RIGHT?



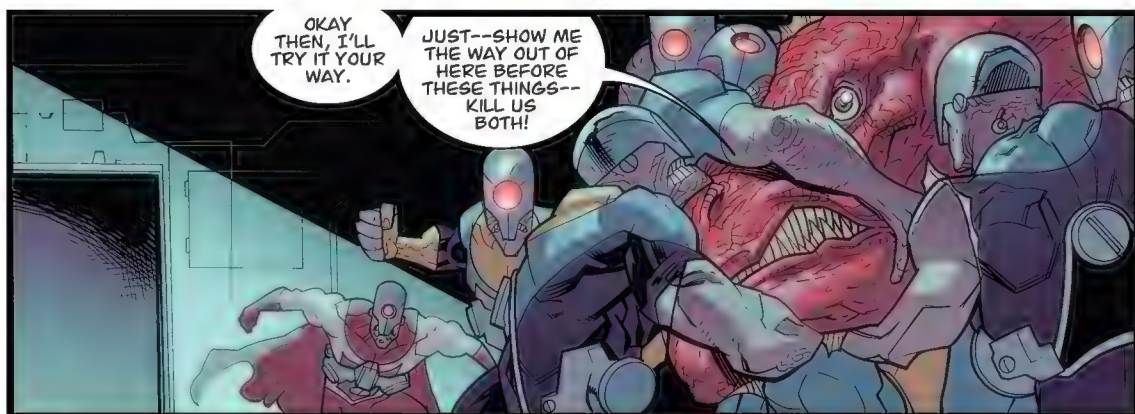
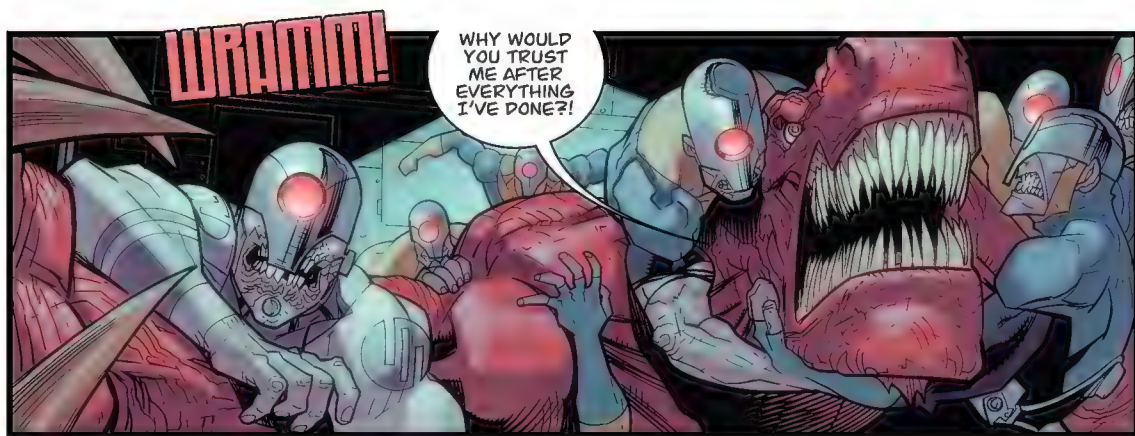
YES, BUT YOUR METHODS... I THINK, IF WE WERE TO WORK TOGETHER, WE COULD DO THINGS THAT ACTUALLY **MATTERED**. WE COULD SAVE THE WORLD-- WITHOUT KILLING ANYONE.

IF YOU'D BE WILLING TO LET ME HELP YOU-- SO THAT NO ONE HAD TO DIE... I'LL HELP YOU ESCAPE, AND I'LL HELP YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE.







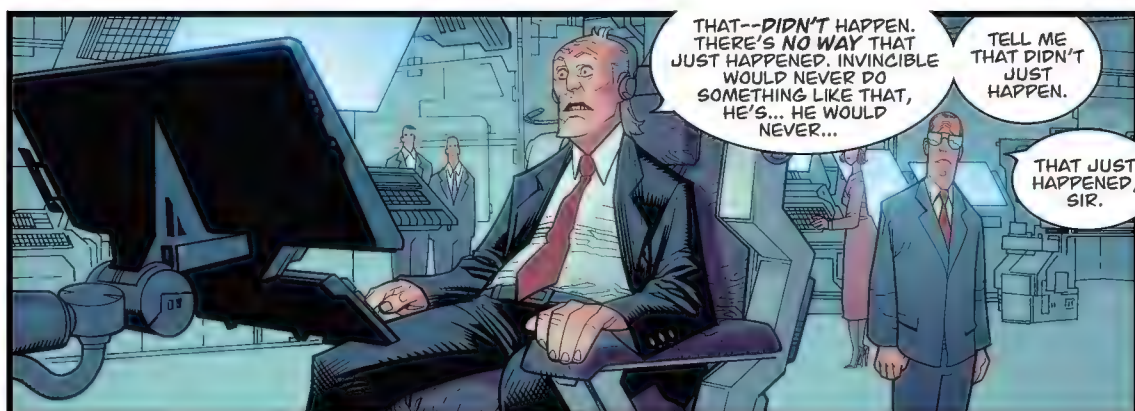
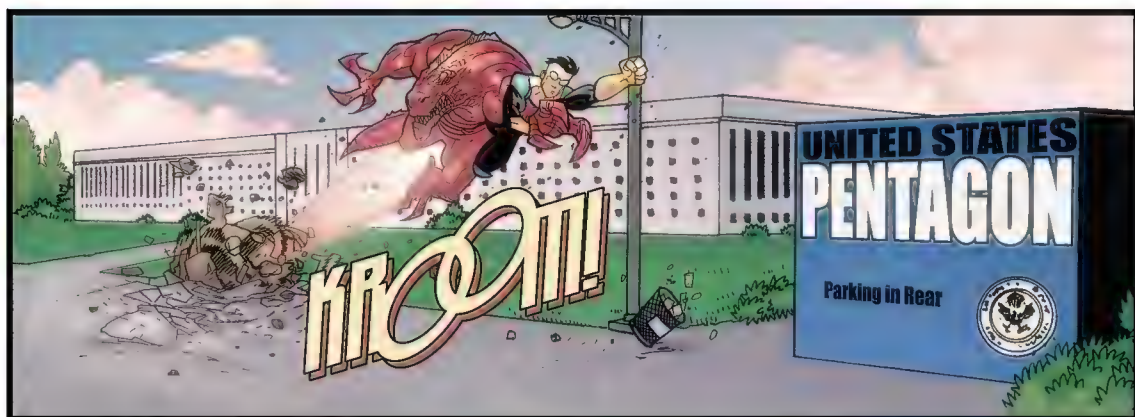




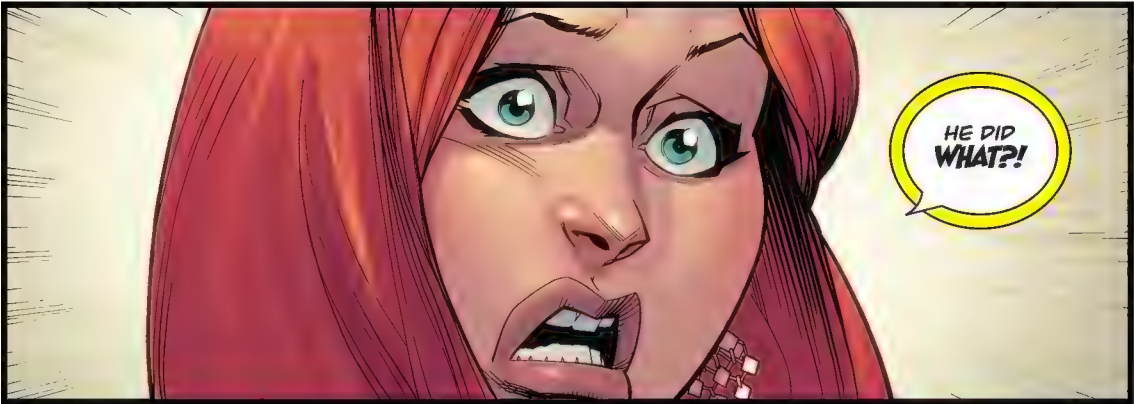
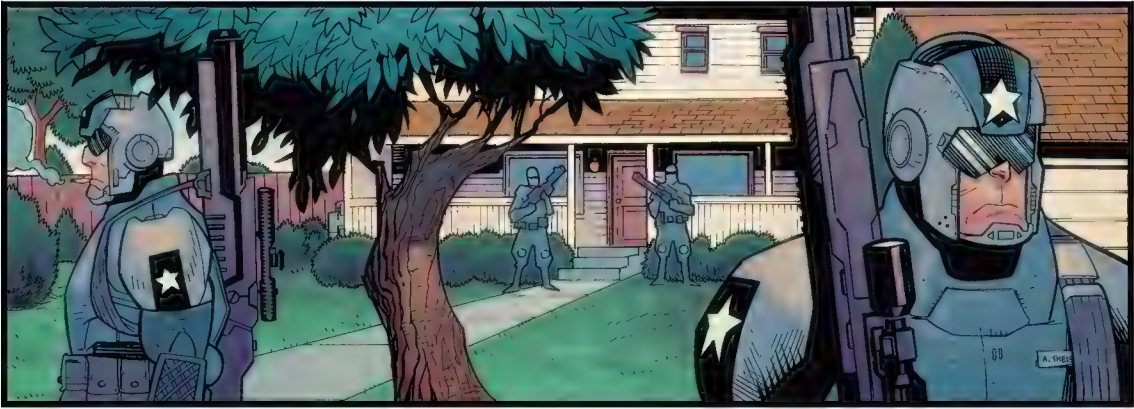
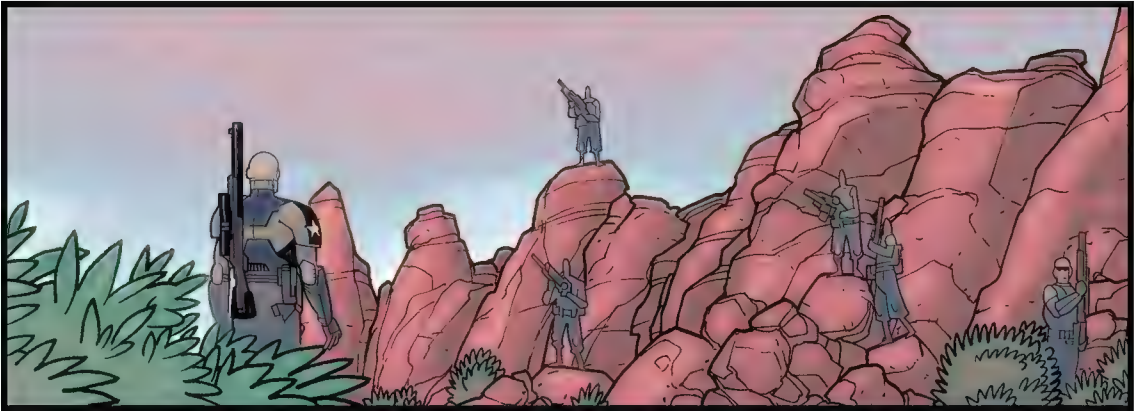
THIS  
WAY.



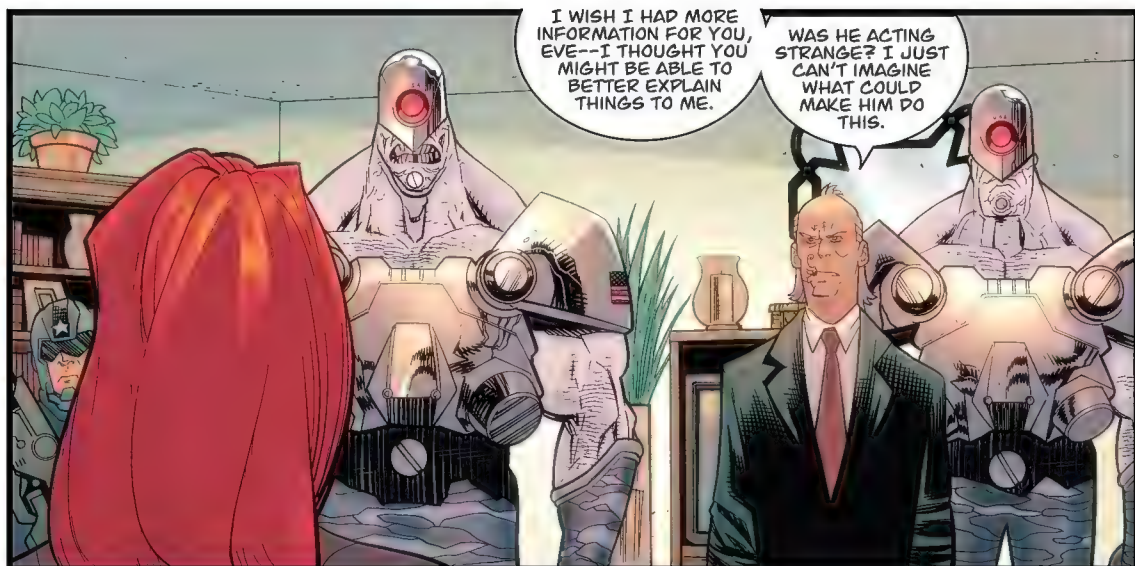












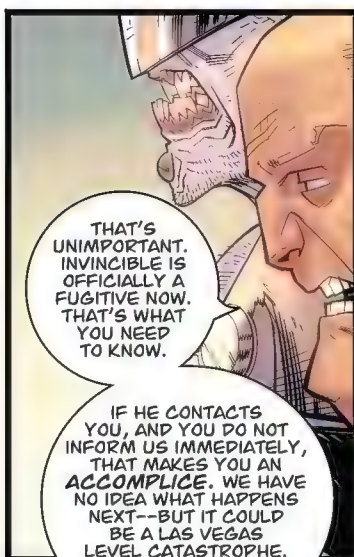
I WISH I HAD MORE INFORMATION FOR YOU, EVE-- I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT BE ABLE TO BETTER EXPLAIN THINGS TO ME.

WAS HE ACTING STRANGE? I JUST CAN'T IMAGINE WHAT COULD MAKE HIM DO THIS.



NO, NOT AT ALL-- HE... TOLD ME HE MIGHT BE DOING SOMETHING CRAZY, BUT ALSO THAT HE **KNEW** IT WAS THE RIGHT THING TO DO...

I THINK I GAVE HIM **PERMISSION** TO DO THIS... THAT'S WHY HE WAS TELLING ME.



THAT'S UNIMPORTANT. INVINCIBLE IS OFFICIALLY A FUGITIVE NOW. THAT'S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW.

IF HE CONTACTS YOU, AND YOU DO NOT INFORM US IMMEDIATELY, THAT MAKES YOU AN **ACCOMPLICE**. WE HAVE NO IDEA WHAT HAPPENS NEXT--BUT IT COULD BE A LAS VEGAS LEVEL CATASTROPHE.



YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS. MARK WOULD NEVER ALLOW SOMETHING LIKE THAT TO HAPPEN.

YOU DON'T REALLY THINK HE'S CAPABLE OF THAT, DO YOU?



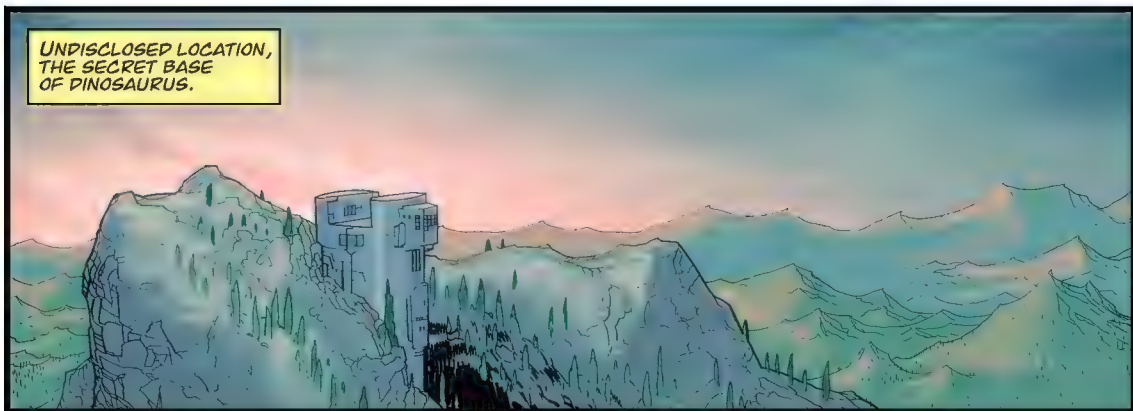
I HAVE **NO IDEA** WHAT HE'S CAPABLE OF AT THIS POINT.

WE NEED TO COME TO THE REALIZATION THAT HE MAY HAVE BEEN WORKING FOR HIS FATHER THIS WHOLE TIME...

...THIS COULD MEAN THE END FOR US ALL.



UNDISCLOSED LOCATION,  
THE SECRET BASE  
OF DINOSAURUS.



READY  
TO GET  
STARTED?

YEAH.

LET'S  
SAVE THE  
WORLD.



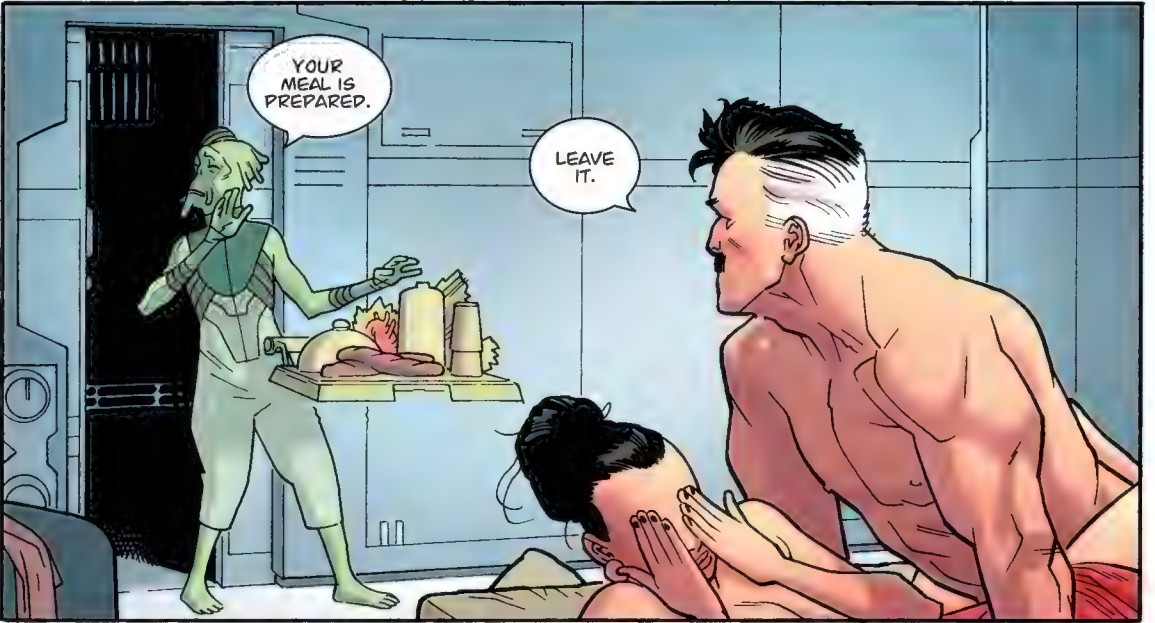
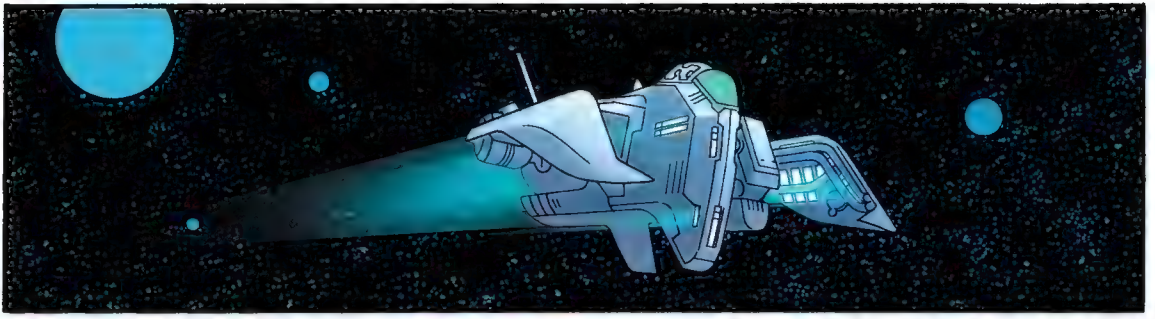




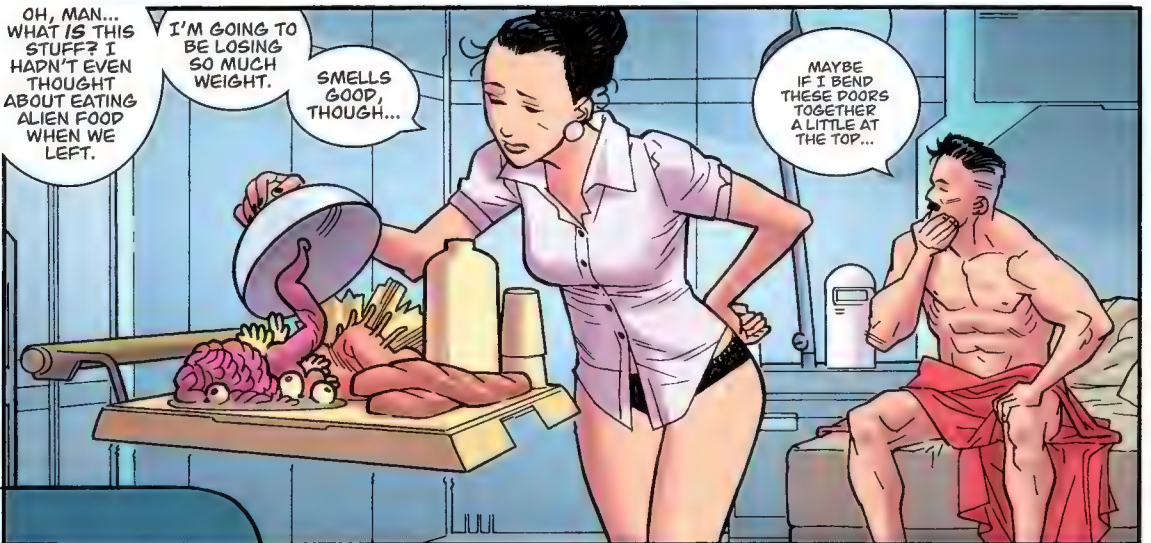
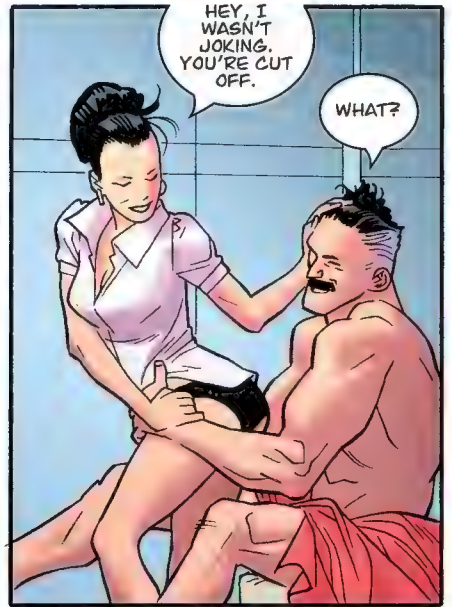
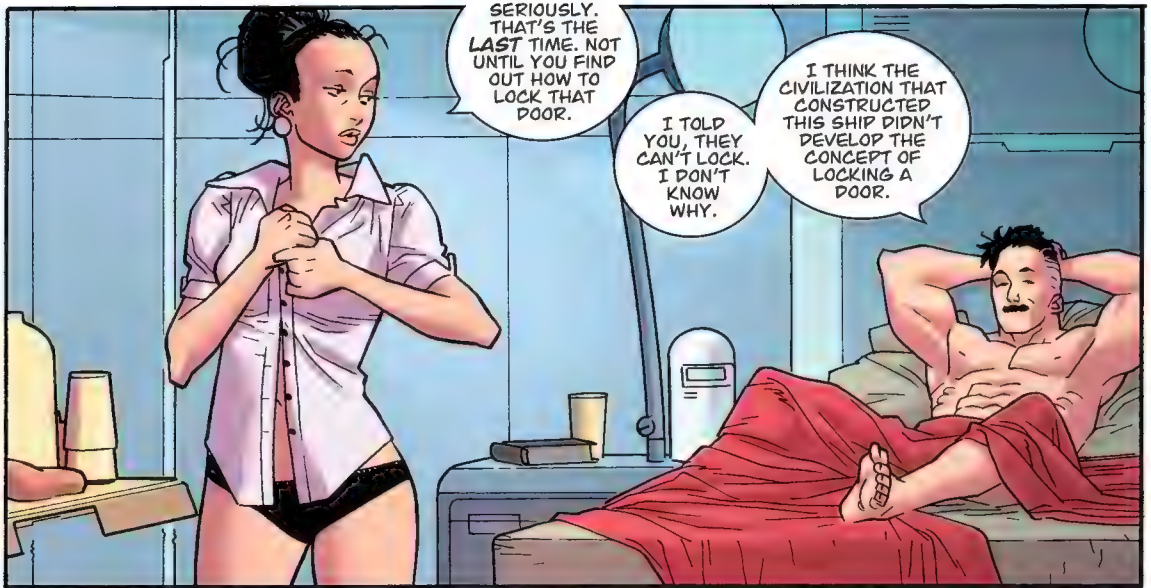
# CHAPTER 85





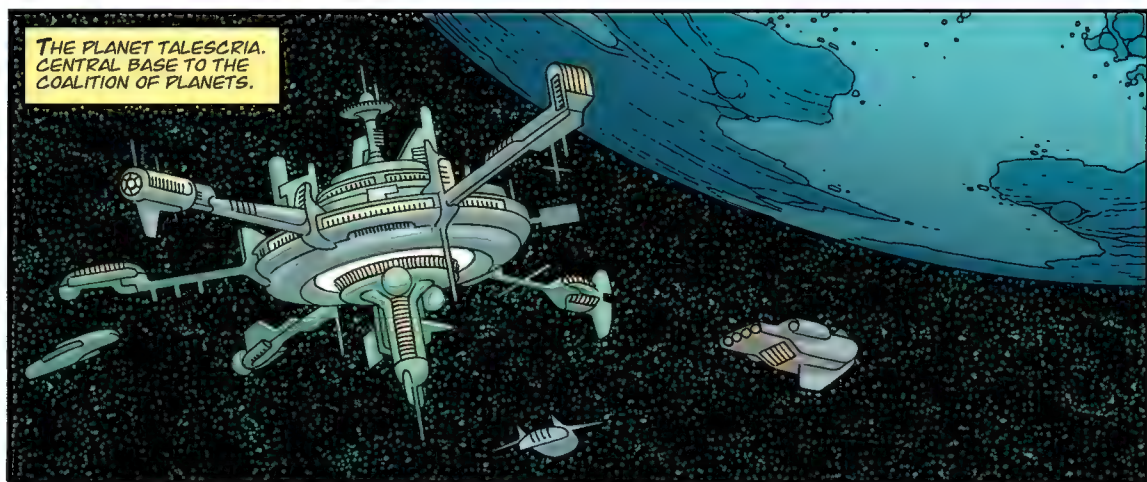








THE PLANET TALESRIA.  
CENTRAL BASE TO THE  
COALITION OF PLANETS.



SERIOUSLY, HE HAS  
TO GO. EVER SINCE  
HE WALKED IN ON US  
YOU JUST HAVEN'T  
BEEN THE SAME.

YOU'VE BEEN  
HOLDING BACK  
ON ME--ADMIT IT.  
WHO CARES WHAT  
HE SAW? HE  
KNOWS WHAT  
PEOPLE DO!

I DON'T  
UNDERSTAND  
WHY HE CAN'T  
JUST STAY AT  
NOLAN'S PLACE  
UNTIL HE  
GETS  
BACK!

HE'S JUST A  
KID. I CAN'T  
LEAVE HIM  
ALONE IN THIS  
CITY.

NOLAN  
WOULD BE  
PISSED.

STILL A KID?! I CAN'T  
STAND THESE ALIEN  
RACES THAT SPEND A  
QUARTER OF THEIR  
LIFESPAN AS  
"KIDS!"

I HAVEN'T  
SEEN MY  
PARENTS  
SINCE I WAS  
THREE.

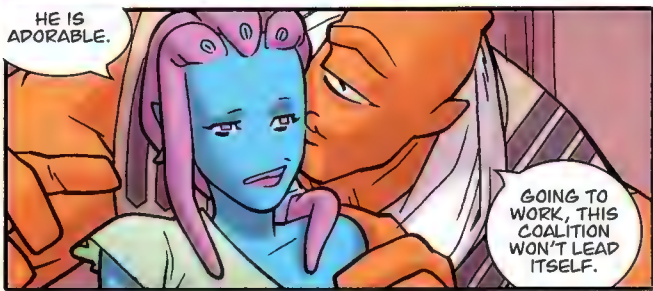
THE BOY  
NEEDS HIS  
HAND HELD SO  
I HAVE TO  
SUFFER?

JUST  
LISTEN TO  
YOURSELF,  
TELIA.

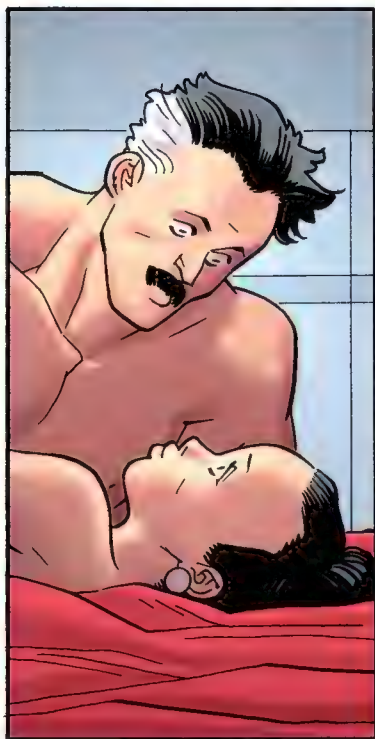
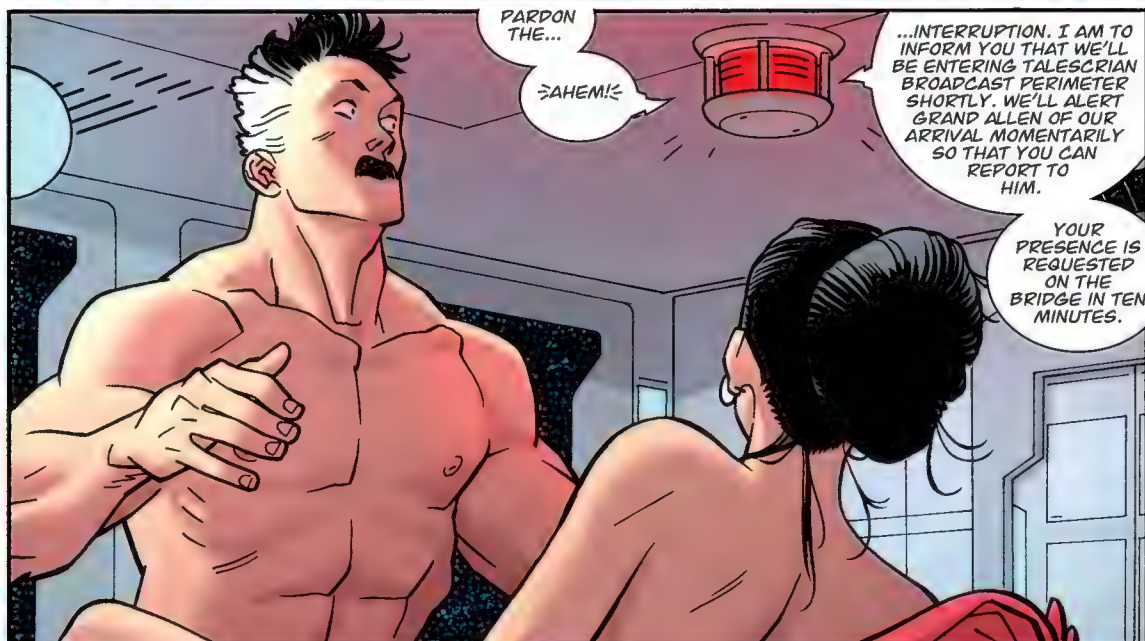
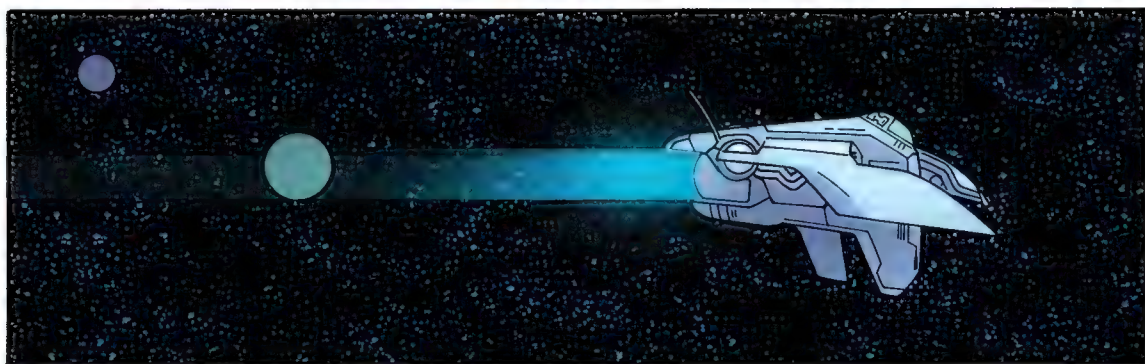
SOMETIMES  
I'M RELIEVED  
THAT OUR  
SPECIES CAN'T  
PRODUCE  
OFFSPRING  
TOGETHER.

...  
NOT  
COOL,  
ALLEN.  
NOT  
COOL.













I EXPECT  
PROGRESS!

SOMETHING  
MUST BE  
DONE!



I'M DOING  
EVERYTHING  
I CAN,  
AMBASSADOR.

I HAVE  
PATROL TEAMS  
CRISSCROSSING  
THE GALAXY,  
LOOKING FOR ANY  
SIGN OF THE  
VILTRUMITES.

ON A HUNCH,  
ONE TEAM WENT  
TO A DISTANT PLANET  
CALLED EARTH. THE  
VILTRUMITES HAVE A  
SPECIAL INTEREST IN  
THAT PLANET... THEY  
MAY HAVE GONE THERE,  
BUT I HAVEN'T  
HEARD BACK FROM  
THAT TEAM.



YOU HAVEN'T  
HEARD FROM  
THEM? HOW DO  
YOU KNOW THEY  
HAVEN'T FOUND THE  
VILTRUMITES AND  
BEEN KILLED BY  
THEM, HOW LONG  
HAVE THEY  
BEEN AWAY?



THE PLANET IS SO DISTANT  
WE CAN'T SEND OR RECEIVE  
TRANSMISSIONS. IF OUR  
CALCULATIONS ARE CORRECT,  
AND THEY TRAVELED THERE  
AND CAME STRAIGHT BACK...  
THEY WOULD HAVE  
RETURNED A FEW  
DAYS AGO.

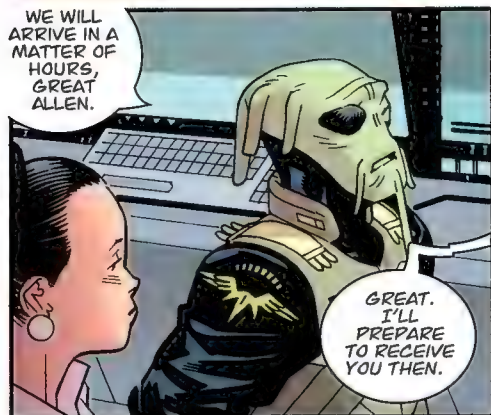
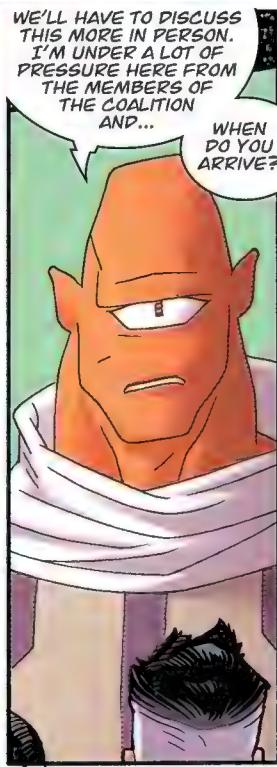
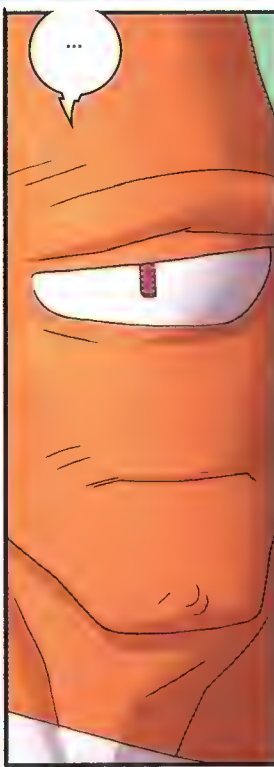
IF WE  
DON'T HEAR  
FROM THEM  
SOON, I'LL  
SEND--



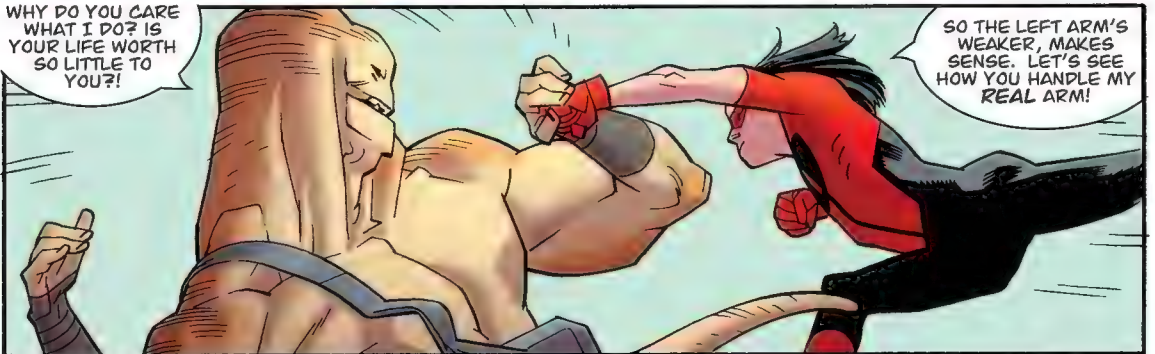
I'M SORRY TO  
INTERRUPT, GREAT  
ALLEN, BUT THERE'S  
A TOP PRIORITY  
TRANSMISSION  
COMING IN FROM  
THE EDGE OF  
BROADCAST  
RANGE.

WHOA,  
NEAT! I  
THINK  
THAT'S  
THEM!

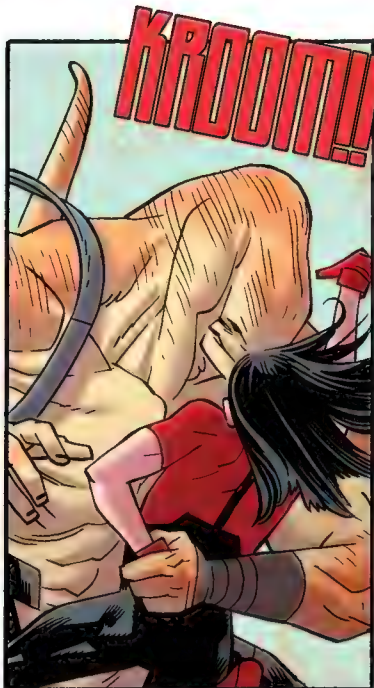




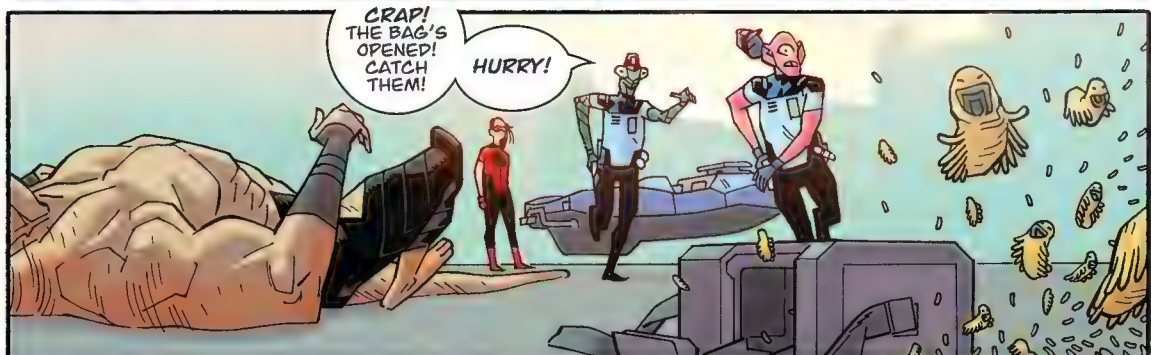




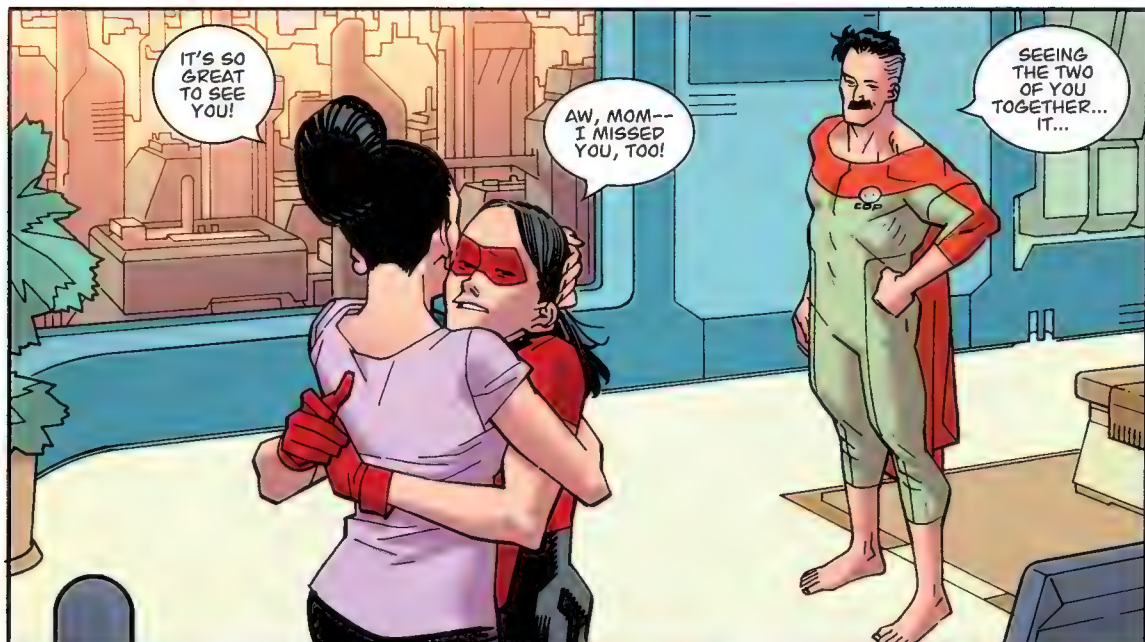
















DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA THE POSITION YOU'VE PUT ME IN?

I KNOW IT SEEMS LIKE A BAD IDEA, BUT HEAR ME OUT--

BAD IDEA? IT'S A HORRIBLE IDEA! WE HAD THE VILTRUMITES ON THE RUN-- THEIR RANKS DEPLETED!

YOU PROPOSE WE LEAVE THEM ALONE--ON EARTH, WHICH IS ESSENTIALLY A BREEDING CAMP!

I SHARE YOUR CONCERN, BUT WE'RE TALKING ABOUT YEARS--DECADES OF LIVING WITH HUMANS IN ORDER TO ADD TO THEIR RANKS.

LOOK WHAT THAT DID FOR ME. I'M CONFIDENT IT COULD TRANSFORM MY PEOPLE... IT COULD BRING THE PEACE WE'VE BEEN FIGHTING FOR.

FORGIVE ME IF I DON'T SHARE YOUR OPTIMISTIC IMPRESSION OF YOUR PEOPLE.



I'VE GOT COUNTLESS PLANETARY SYSTEMS TO REPORT TO, THEY RELY ON ME FOR THEIR PROTECTION.

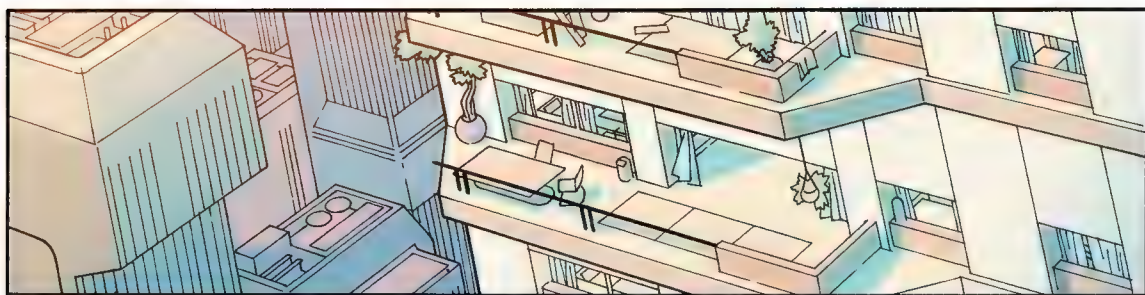
I DON'T KNOW THAT I CAN JUST...

I'VE GOT A LOT TO CONSIDER. PLEASE...

...LEAVE ME.







IT WAS UNSETTLING TO SEE HIM THAT WAY--LIKE TALKING TO SOMEONE I DIDN'T KNOW.

ALLEN AND I HAVE A BOND... THIS SITUATION ON EARTH... IT HAS ME CONCERNED.

AS IT SHOULD. JUST BECAUSE THEY SAY THEY'RE NOT GOING TO CAUSE ANY TROUBLE, DOESN'T MEAN YOU SHOULD BELIEVE THEM.

YOUR PEOPLE ARE VERY GOOD LIARS.

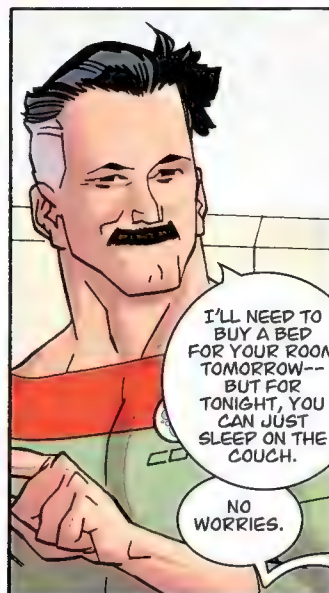


OKAY, I DESERVE THAT.



THIS PLACE IS TOTALLY GREAT. I WISH ALLEN HAD JUST LET ME STAY HERE WHILE YOU WERE GONE.

AND I'M GLAD HE KEPT YOU OUT OF TROUBLE.



I'LL NEED TO BUY A BED FOR YOUR ROOM TOMORROW-- BUT FOR TONIGHT, YOU CAN JUST SLEEP ON THE COUCH.

NO WORRIES.



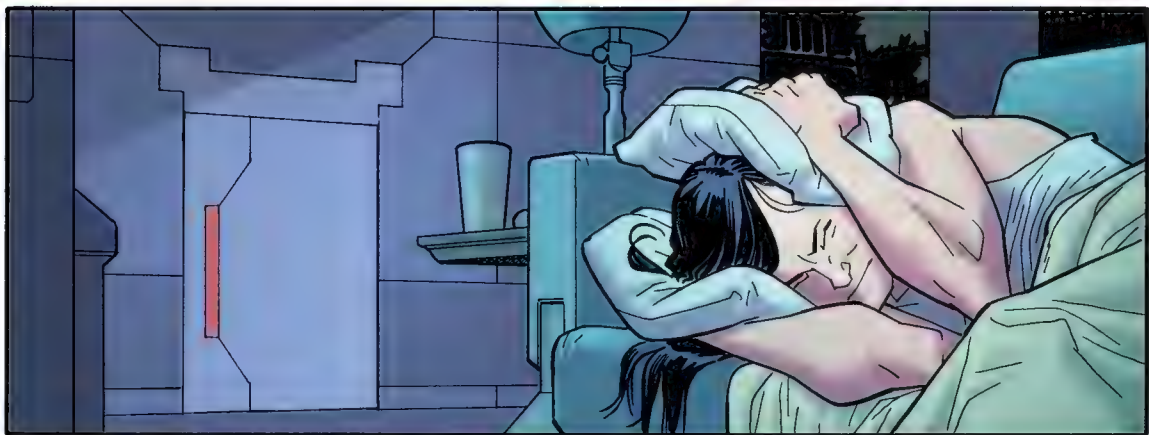
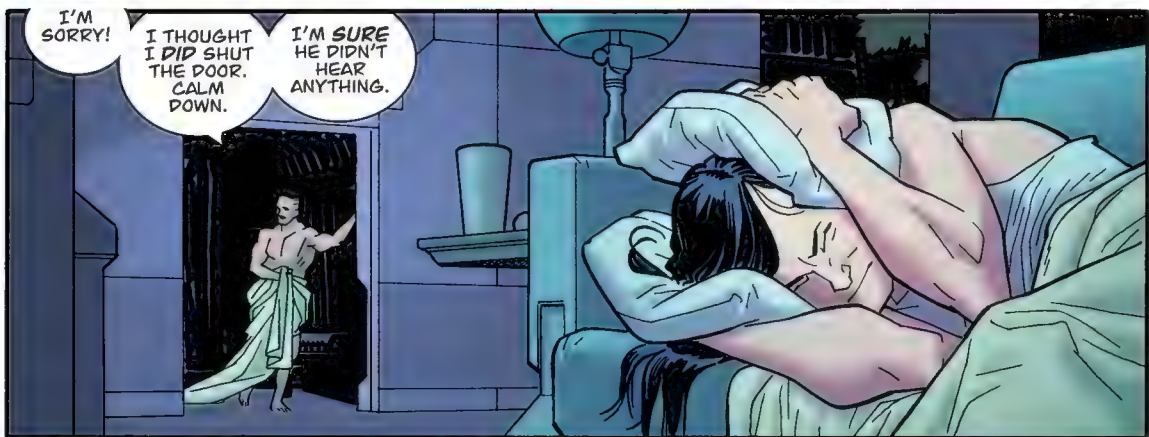
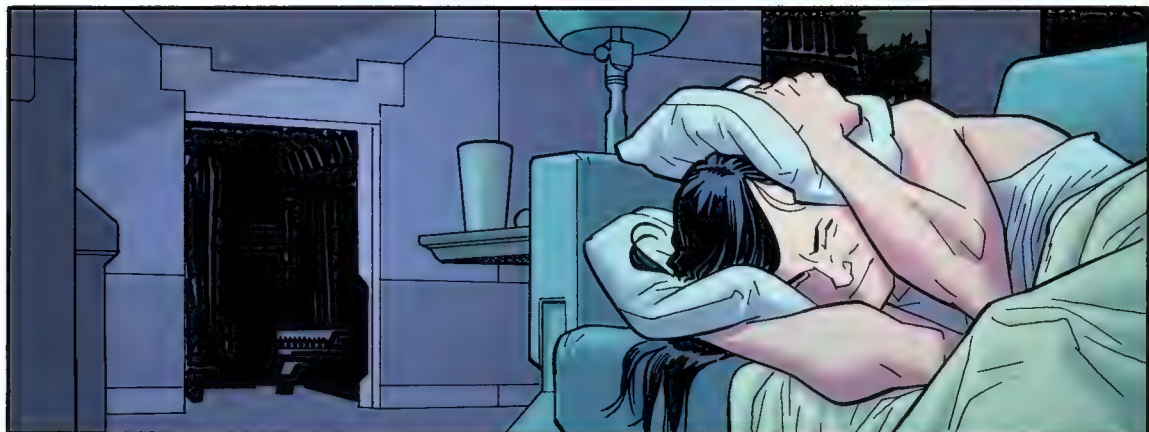
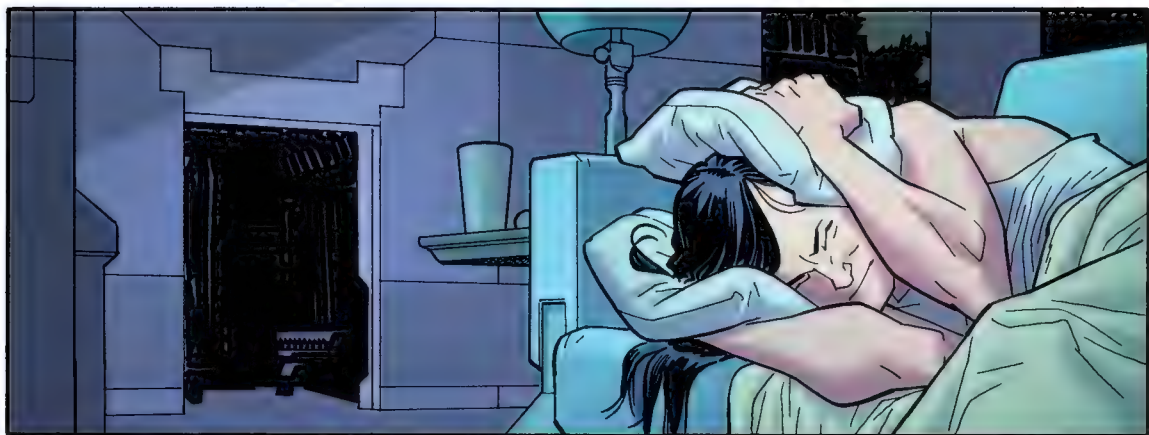
ANYTHING WILL BE BETTER THAN STAYING WITH ALLEN AND TELIA. I HEARD EVERYTHING AT THAT PLACE...

AND I MEAN... UGH... EVERYTHING.

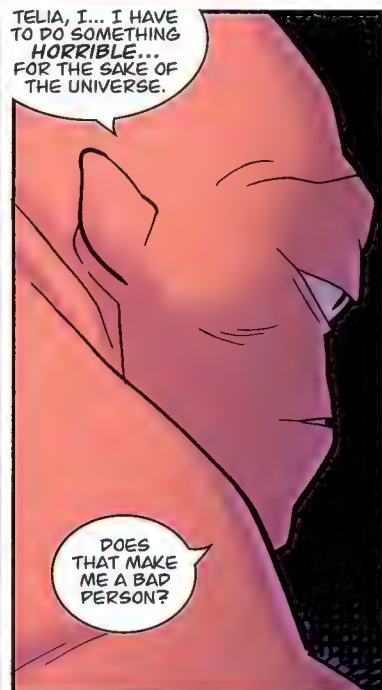
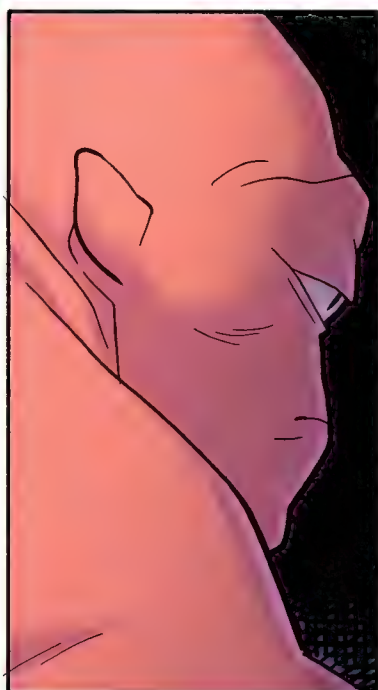
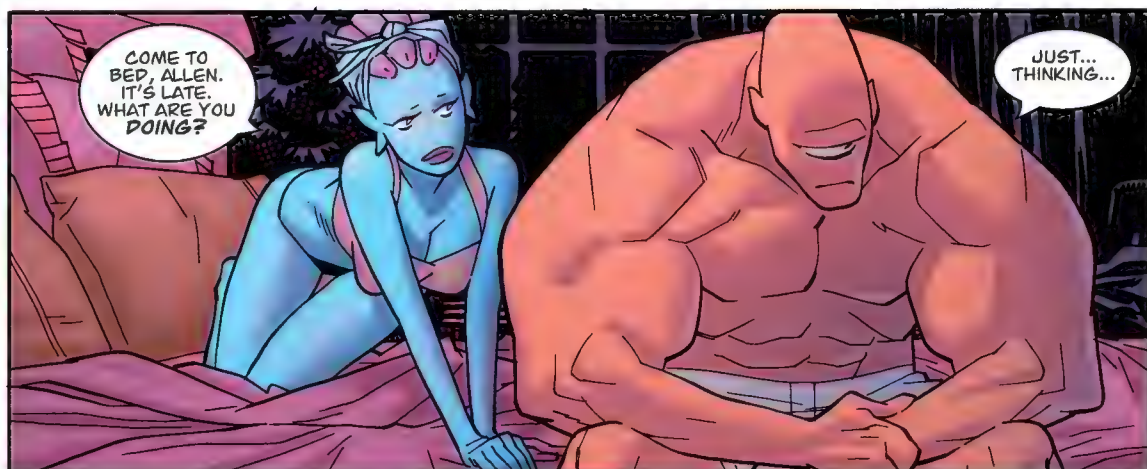


WELL, YOU WON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT THAT HERE...













SLEEP WELL?

YEAH.

ALLEN AND TELIA TAKE CARE OF YOU WHILE I WAS AWAY?

OOH, SORE SUBJECT. YOU'RE NO LONGER A CHILD. DULY NOTED.

DO YOU LIKE IT HERE?

SO, ARE WE GOING TO STAY HERE?

ON MY MOTHER'S PLANET--I'D BE AN ELDER, HELL--I'D BE **MONARCH** BY NOW. THEY "TOOK CARE OF ME" AS MUCH AS YOU WOULD NEED TO "TAKE CARE" OF AN ADULT.

I KIND OF DO. IT'S... BETTER THAN EARTH IN A LOT OF WAYS. PEOPLE SEEM MORE AWARE OF THE UNIVERSE AS A WHOLE. THE PEOPLE SEEM MUCH MORE ENLIGHTENED... I... NEVER CARED FOR EARTH ALL THAT MUCH.

OH? I DON'T KNOW THAT YOU SPENT ENOUGH TIME THERE, THEN. THERE'S A LOT TO LIKE.

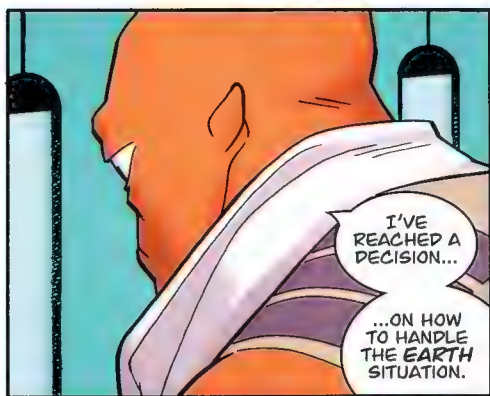
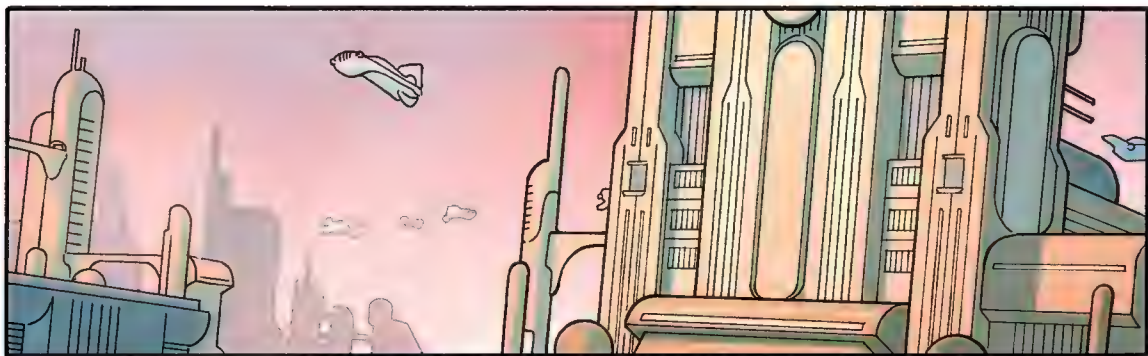
WHEN WAS THE LAST WAR THAT TOOK PLACE ON THIS PLANET-- THAT ONLY INVOLVED PEOPLE ON THIS PLANET? THE FACT THAT THE PEOPLE ON EARTH STILL FIGHT EACH OTHER... IT'S JUST... STUPID.

I'D WAGER YOU AND MARK CARE FOR EARTH FAR MORE THAN MOST PEOPLE ON EARTH CARE FOR EACH OTHER.

DO YOU THINK THAT'S A BAD THING?

I DON'T KNOW...









BEFORE  
HE DIED...  
THAEPUS TOLD  
YOU ABOUT  
THE **SCOURGE**  
VIRUS...  
DIDN'T  
HE?



DON'T.  
IT'S NO  
LONGER  
THERE.



WHERE  
IS IT?



I'M SORRY, THIS  
IS GOING TO GET  
UGLY, BUT I JUST  
COULDN'T DO THIS  
WITHOUT TELLING  
YOU FIRST.

I VALUE  
OUR  
FRIENDSHIP  
TOO MUCH.

IT'S BEING  
LOADED ON A  
**SHIP**, THAT I AM  
**PERSONALLY**  
GOING TO TRAVEL  
TO EARTH IN... WHERE I  
WILL THEN INTRODUCE  
THE VIRUS INTO  
THE PLANET'S  
ATMOSPHERE.

I'M  
SORRY.











# CHAPTER 86



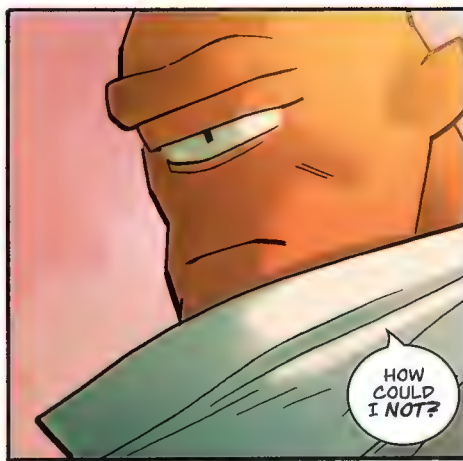
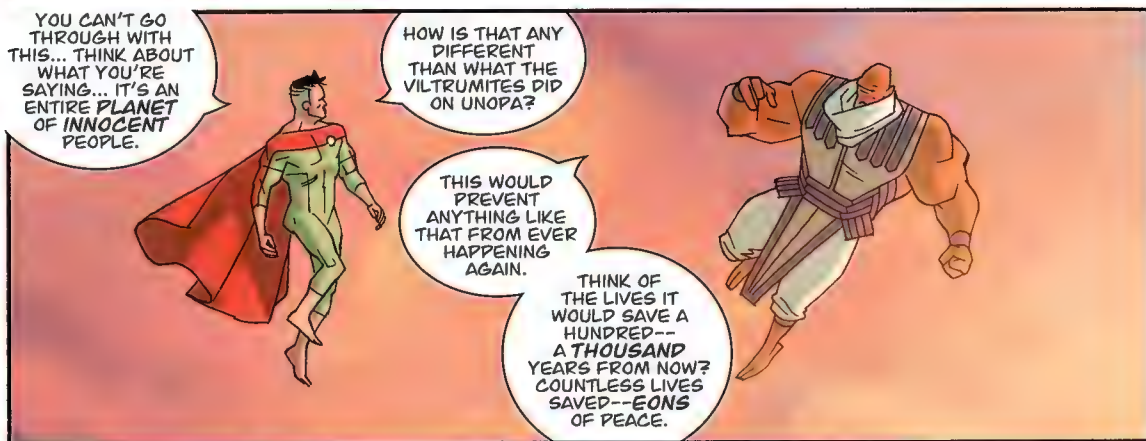
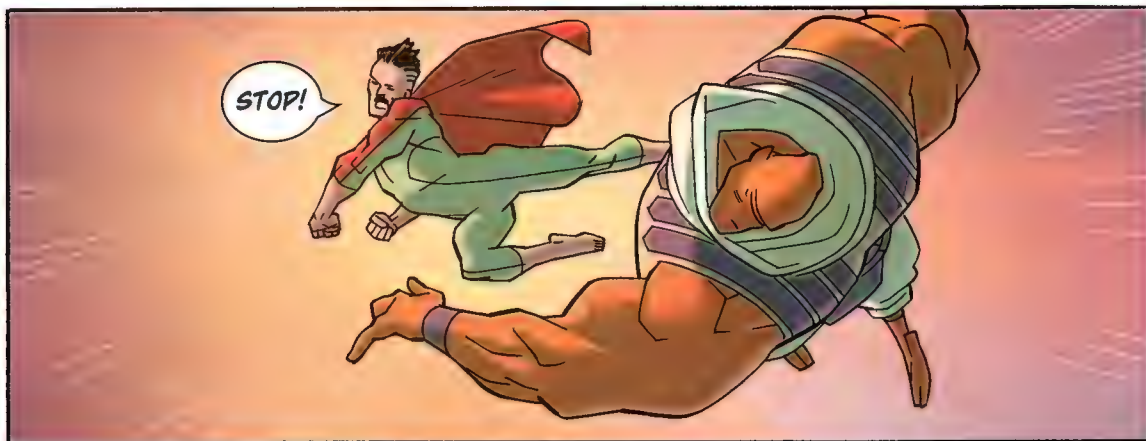




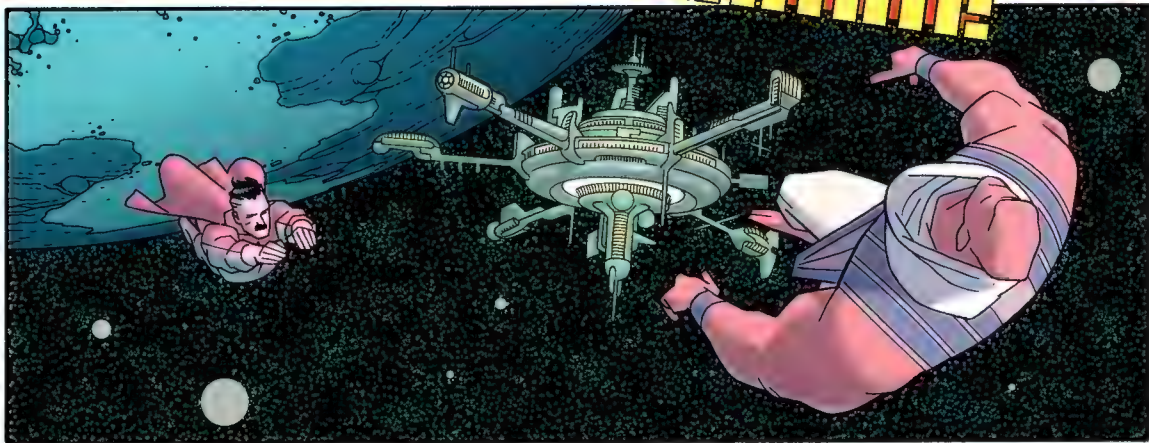
















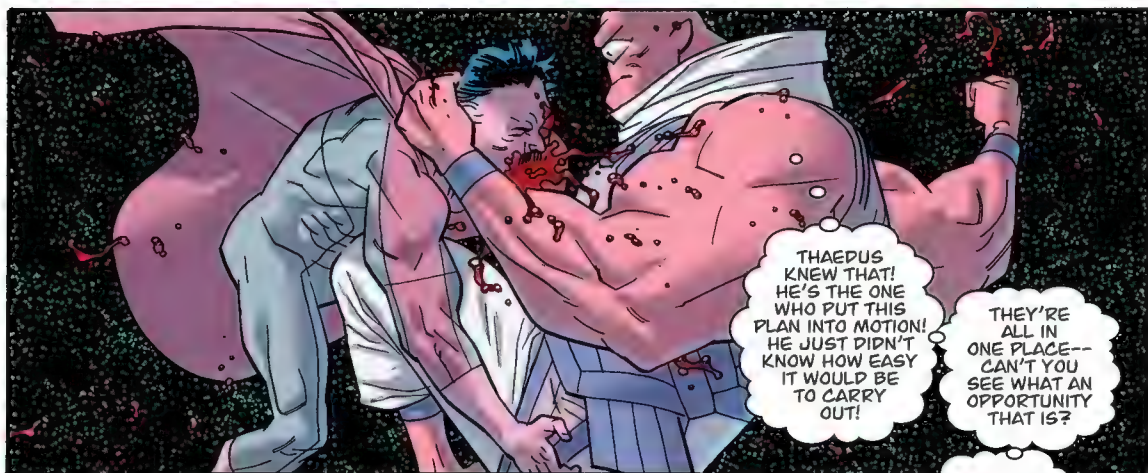
I KNEW  
YOU'D MAKE  
ME DO THIS! I  
KNEW YOU'D  
STAND  
AGAINST  
ME!

YOU CAN'T  
SEE THINGS  
THE WAY I DO.  
YOUR TIME WITH  
THE VILTRUMITE  
EMPIRE HAS  
SCARRED  
YOU!



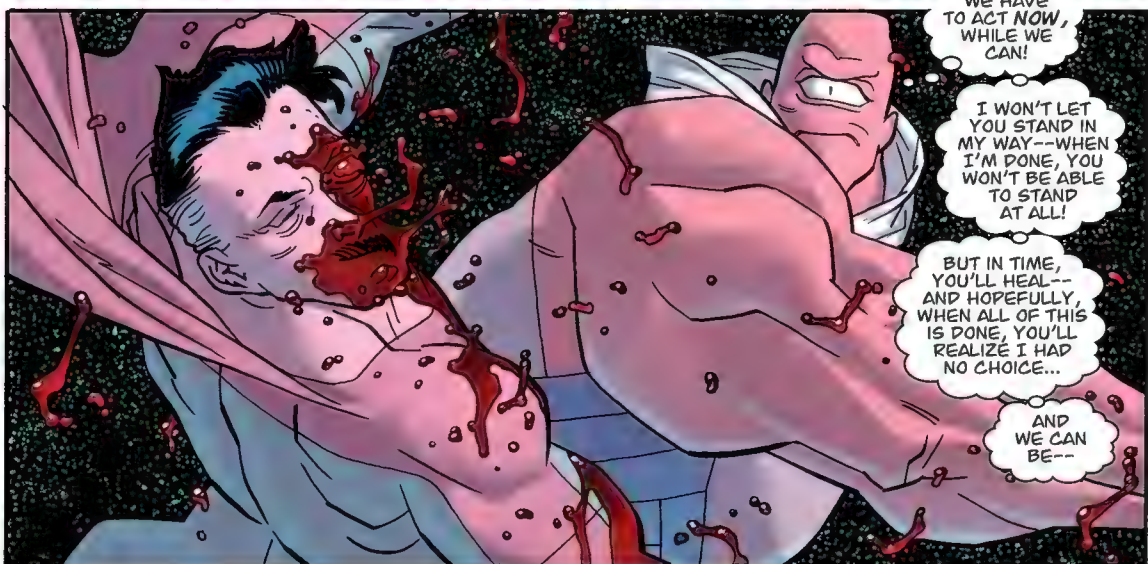
YOU FEEL  
LIKE IF YOU TAKE  
ONE STEP BACK  
TOWARD THAT  
LIFE--YOU WON'T  
COME BACK!

BUT I LEAD  
THE COALITION  
NOW! I HAVE TO  
PROTECT MILLIONS  
OF LIVES! SOMETIMES  
THESE KINDS OF  
DECISIONS HAVE  
TO BE MADE!



THAEPUS  
KNEW THAT!  
HE'S THE ONE  
WHO PUT THIS  
PLAN INTO MOTION!  
HE JUST DIDN'T  
KNOW HOW EASY  
IT WOULD BE  
TO CARRY  
OUT!

THEY'RE  
ALL IN  
ONE PLACE--  
CAN'T YOU  
SEE WHAT AN  
OPPORTUNITY  
THAT IS?



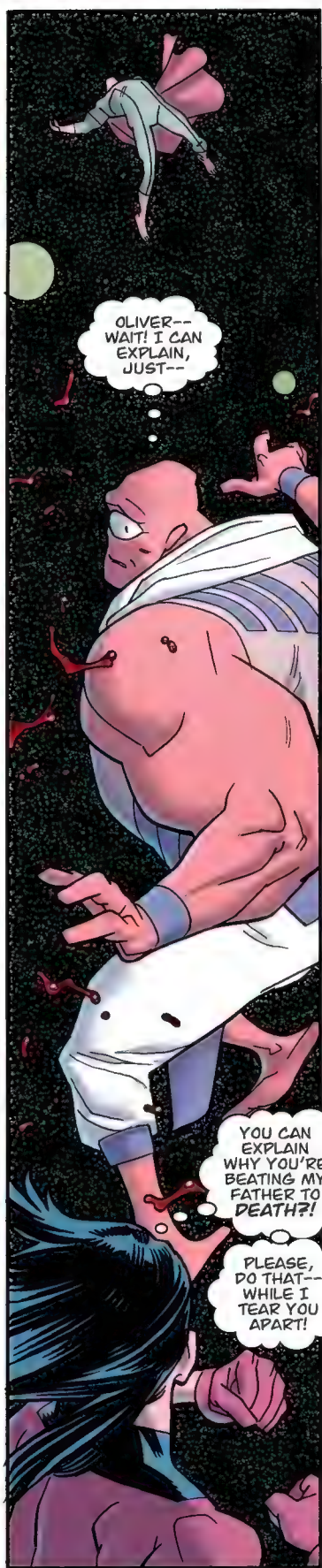
WE HAVE  
TO ACT NOW,  
WHILE WE  
CAN!

I WON'T LET  
YOU STAND IN  
MY WAY--WHEN  
I'M DONE, YOU  
WON'T BE ABLE  
TO STAND  
AT ALL!

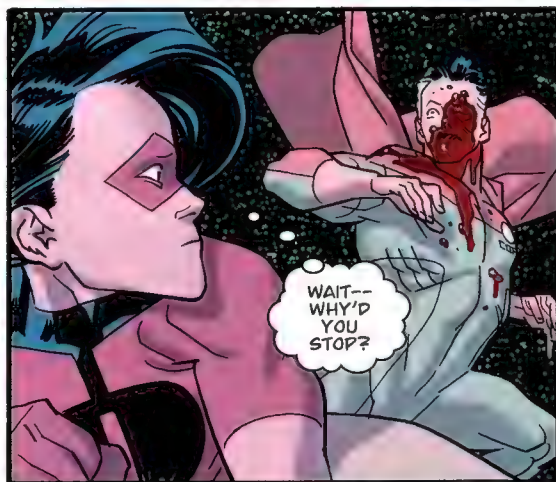
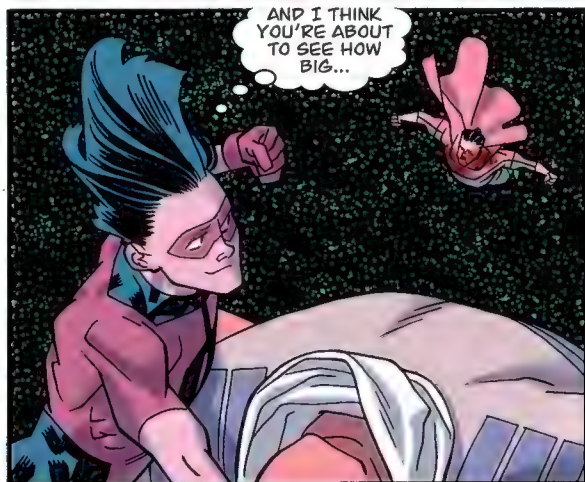
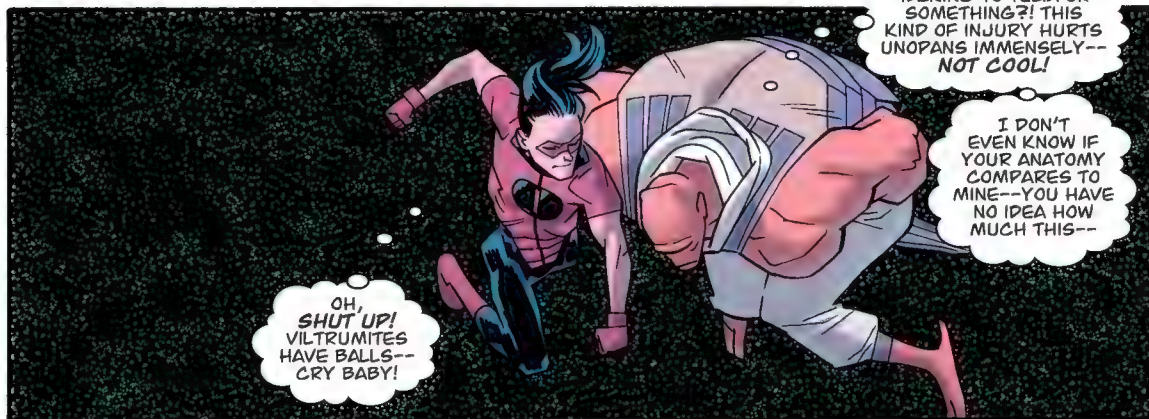
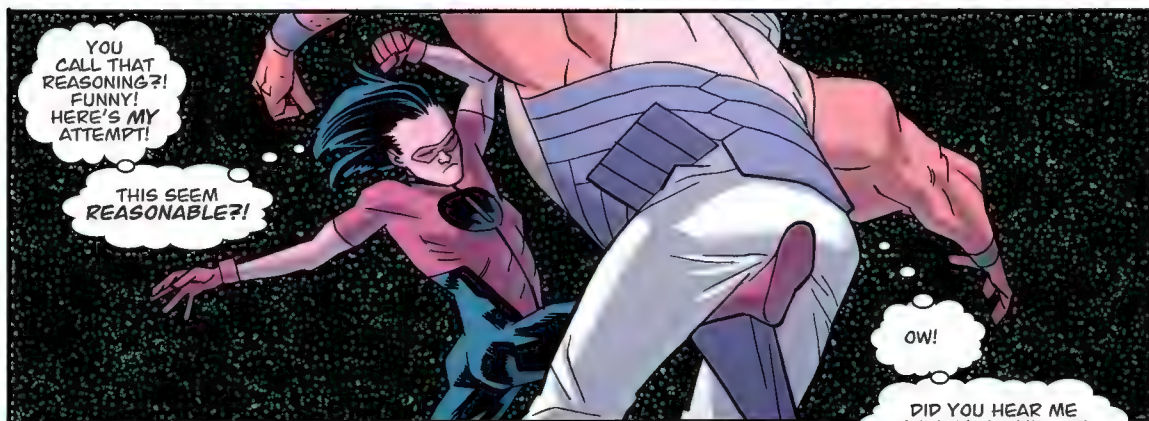
BUT IN TIME,  
YOU'LL HEAL--  
AND HOPEFULLY,  
WHEN ALL OF THIS  
IS DONE, YOU'LL  
REALIZE I HAD  
NO CHOICE...

AND  
WE CAN  
BE--

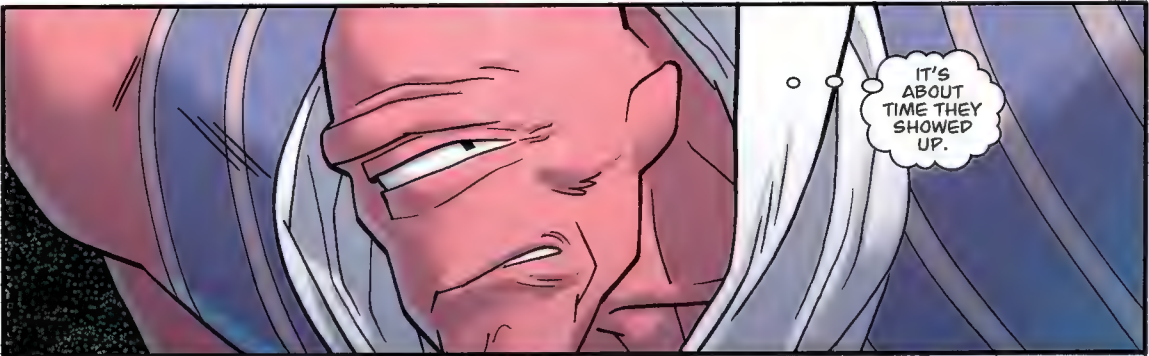








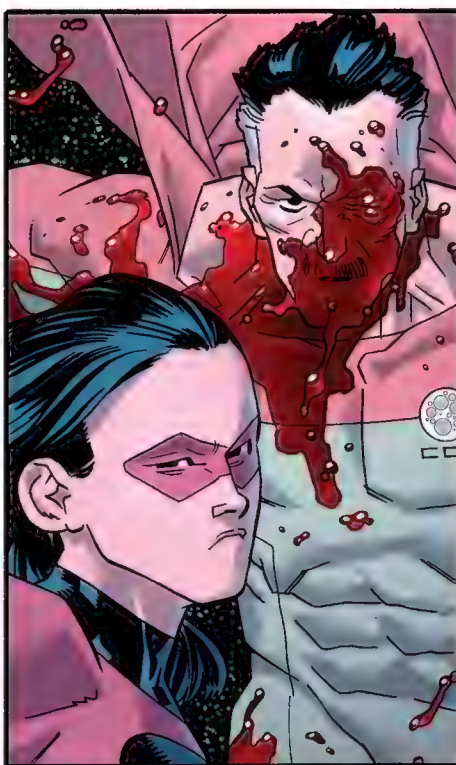








OKAY...



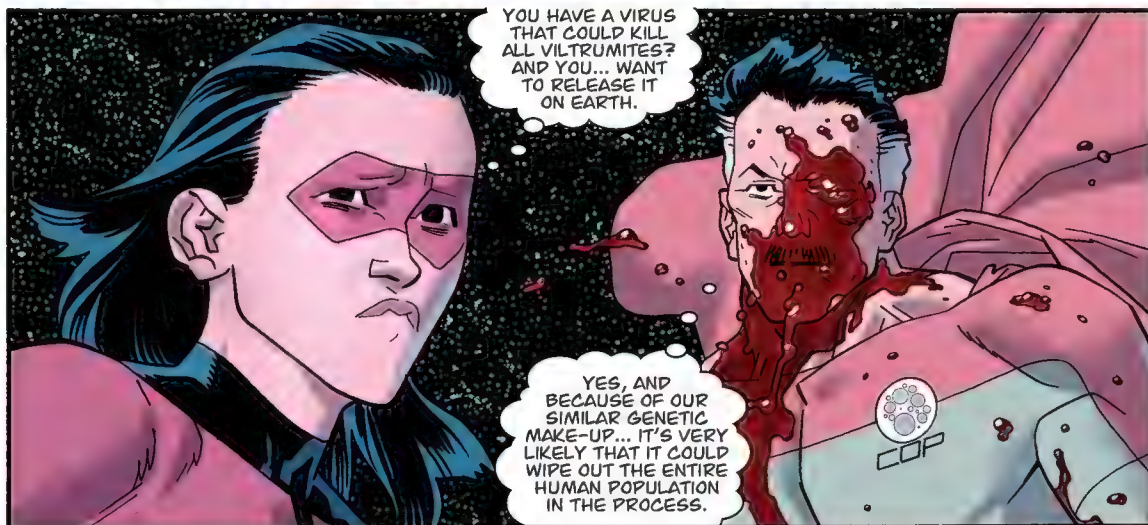
LET ME TRY  
THIS AGAIN  
WHILE THE  
THREAT OF MY  
SOLDIERS HAS  
YOU WILLING  
TO LISTEN.



IF I RELEASE THE SCOURGE  
VIRUS ON EARTH--IT'S NOT  
ONE-HUNDRED PERCENT  
CERTAIN THAT IT WILL  
AFFECT THE HUMAN  
POPULATION THERE. IT'S  
POSSIBLE... BUT  
THAT'S IT.

I'M SORRY,  
BUT--THAT'S A  
RISK WORTH  
TAKING. IF THAT  
VIRUS CAN WIPE OUT  
THE VILTRUMITES  
ONCE AND FOR ALL--  
RID THE UNIVERSE  
OF THAT THREAT...  
I HAVE TO  
DO IT.

IF YOU THINK  
ABOUT THIS...  
REALLY CONSIDER  
WHAT IS AT STAKE  
HERE, YOU'LL  
SEE THAT I'M  
RIGHT.



YOU HAVE A VIRUS  
THAT COULD KILL  
ALL VILTRUMITES?  
AND YOU... WANT  
TO RELEASE IT  
ON EARTH.

YES, AND  
BECAUSE OF OUR  
SIMILAR GENETIC  
MAKE-UP... IT'S VERY  
LIKELY THAT IT COULD  
WIPE OUT THE ENTIRE  
HUMAN POPULATION  
IN THE PROCESS.





HE'S  
RIGHT.

LET  
HIM DO  
IT.

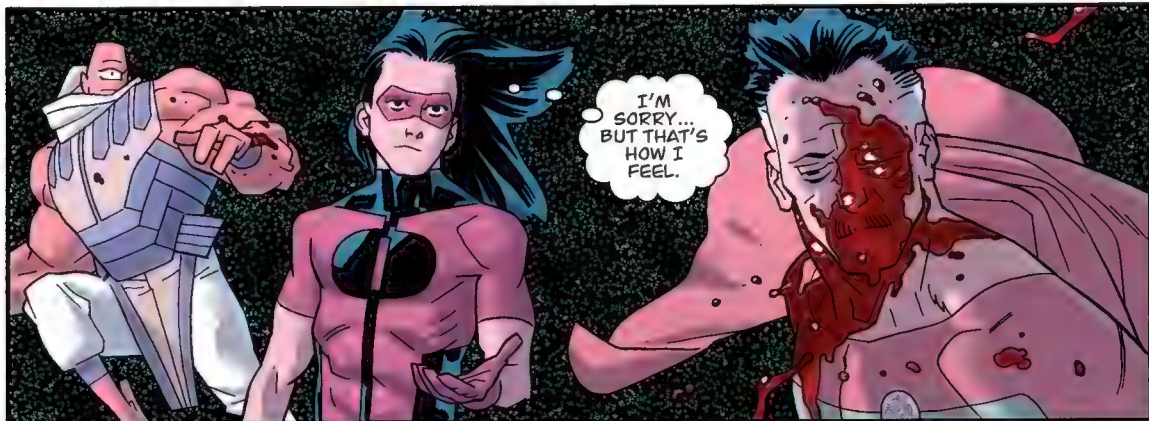


OLIVER?

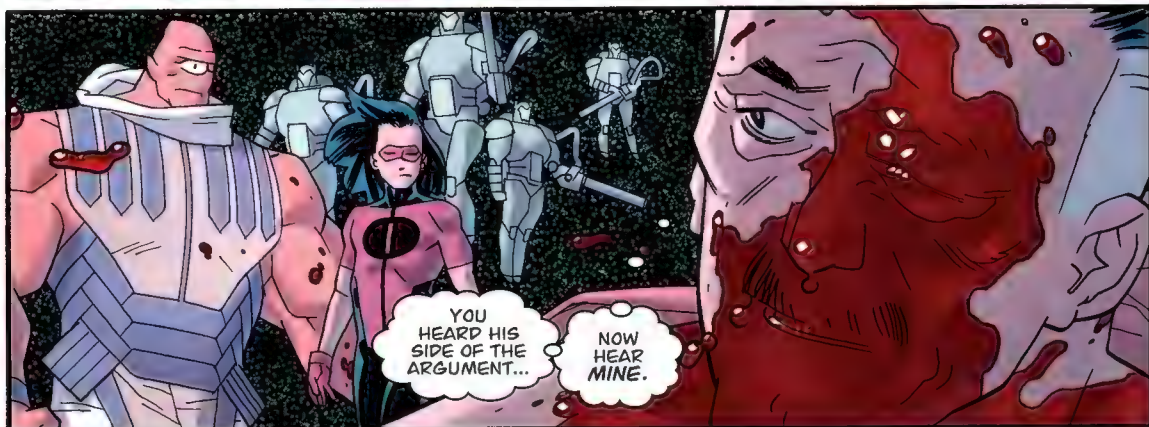


I'M SURE HE'D  
WARN MARK--AND  
LET HIM TAKE EVE  
AND A FEW OTHER  
PEOPLE HE LIKED  
OFF-PLANET.

MOM'S  
ALREADY HERE.  
THERE'S REALLY  
NO ONE ELSE I  
CARE ABOUT.



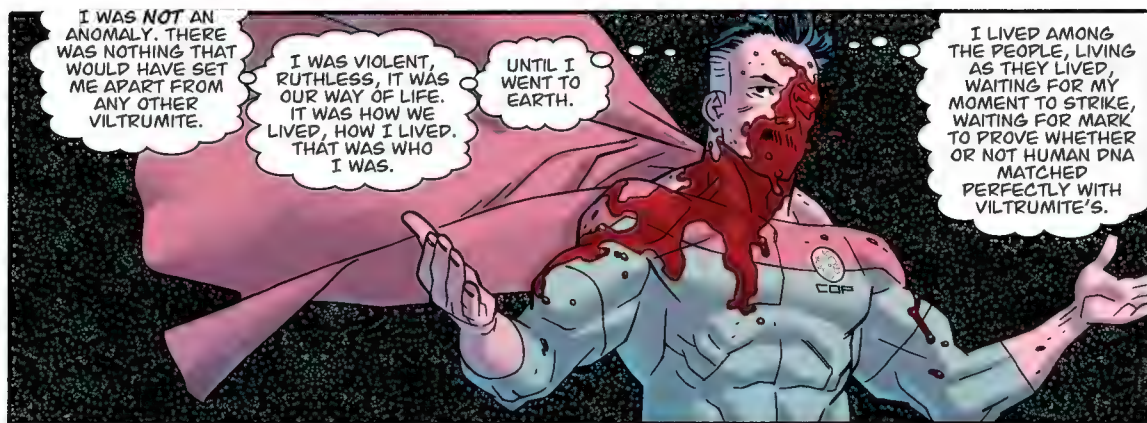
I'M  
SORRY...  
BUT THAT'S  
HOW I  
FEEL.



YOU  
HEARD HIS  
SIDE OF THE  
ARGUMENT...

NOW  
HEAR  
MINE.





I WAS NOT AN ANOMALY. THERE WAS NOTHING THAT WOULD HAVE SET ME APART FROM ANY OTHER VILTRUMITE.

I WAS VIOLENT, RUTHLESS, IT WAS OUR WAY OF LIFE. IT WAS HOW WE LIVED, HOW I LIVED. THAT WAS WHO I WAS.

UNTIL I WENT TO EARTH.

I LIVED AMONG THE PEOPLE, LIVING AS THEY LIVED, WAITING FOR MY MOMENT TO STRIKE, WAITING FOR MARK TO PROVE WHETHER OR NOT HUMAN DNA MATCHED PERFECTLY WITH VILTRUMITE'S.

THAT TIME CHANGED ME. I HARDLY EVEN REALIZED IT AT THE TIME. THE AFFECTION SHOWN FOR THOSE AROUND THEM, THOSE THEY... LOVE. I PRETENDED... UNTIL I WASN'T PRETENDING ANYMORE.

WHEN THE TIME CAME TO COMPLETE MY MISSION, I COULDN'T DO IT... I WAS DIFFERENT. EARTH HAD CHANGED ME.

NOW WHAT REMAINS OF MY PEOPLE ARE EXISTING ON EARTH, AS I DID, AND FOR A LONGER PERIOD OF TIME.

I CAN'T HELP BUT THINK THE SAME THING THAT HAPPENED TO ME... WILL HAPPEN TO ALL OF THEM.



AND WHAT IF THAT DOESN'T HAPPEN? WE WILL HAVE SQUANDERED OUR ONLY CHANCE TO RID OURSELVES OF THIS THREAT TO OUR ENTIRE UNIVERSE.

HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN WHAT YOUR PEOPLE ARE CAPABLE OF? OUR EFFORTS TO DESTROY THEM IN THE RECENT WAR?

I'M CONFUSED, MY FRIEND. ARE YOU TRYING TO SAVE THE INNOCENT PEOPLE OF EARTH... OR YOUR VILTRUMITE BRETHREN?

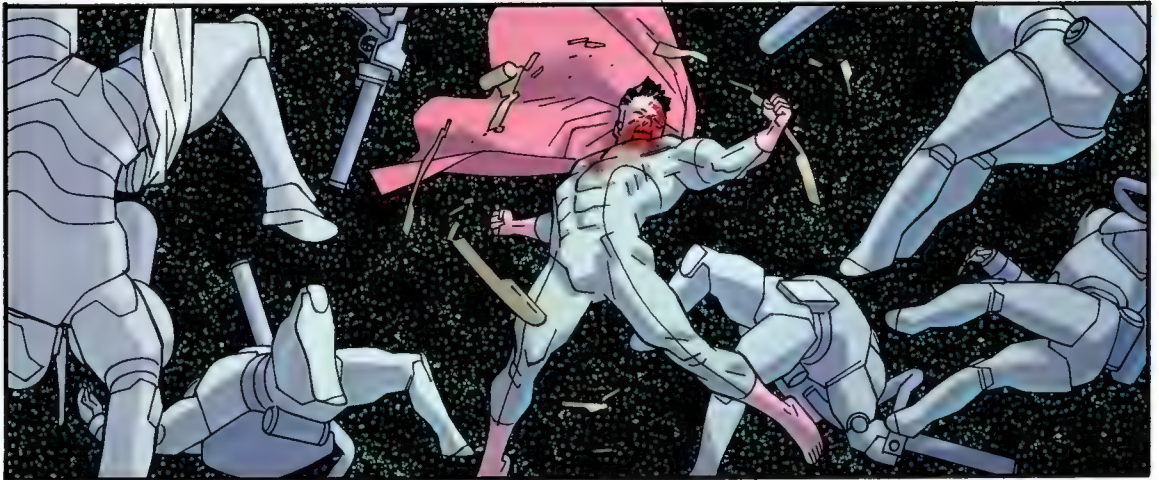
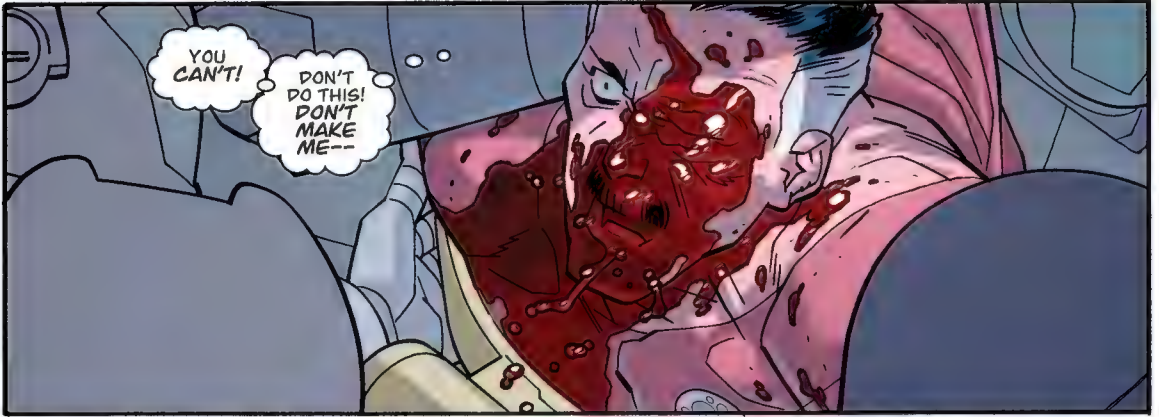
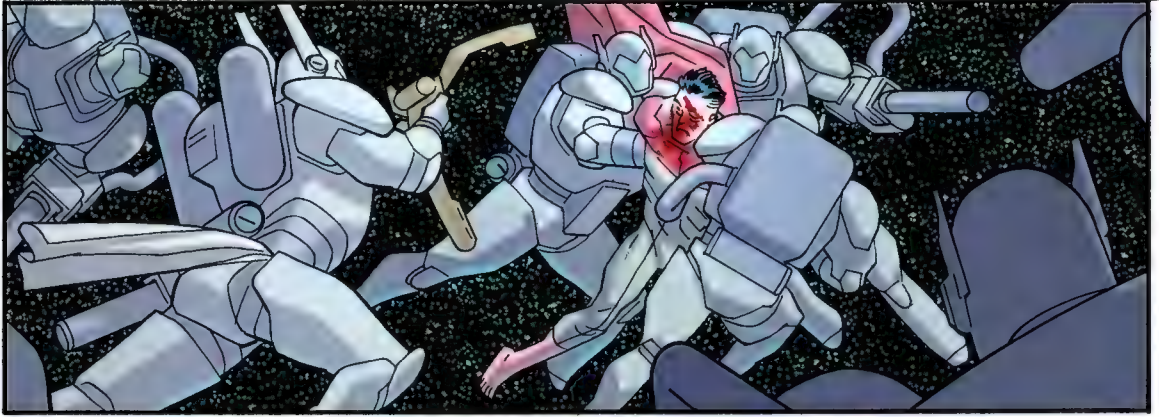


WHAT YOU SAY ABOUT THE PEOPLE OF EARTH IS TRUE OF MY MOTHER, AND VERY FEW OTHERS. I HAVE READ THE ENTIRETY OF THEIR WRITTEN HISTORY... MY OPINION OF THEM DIFFERS FROM YOURS... SUBSTANTIALLY.

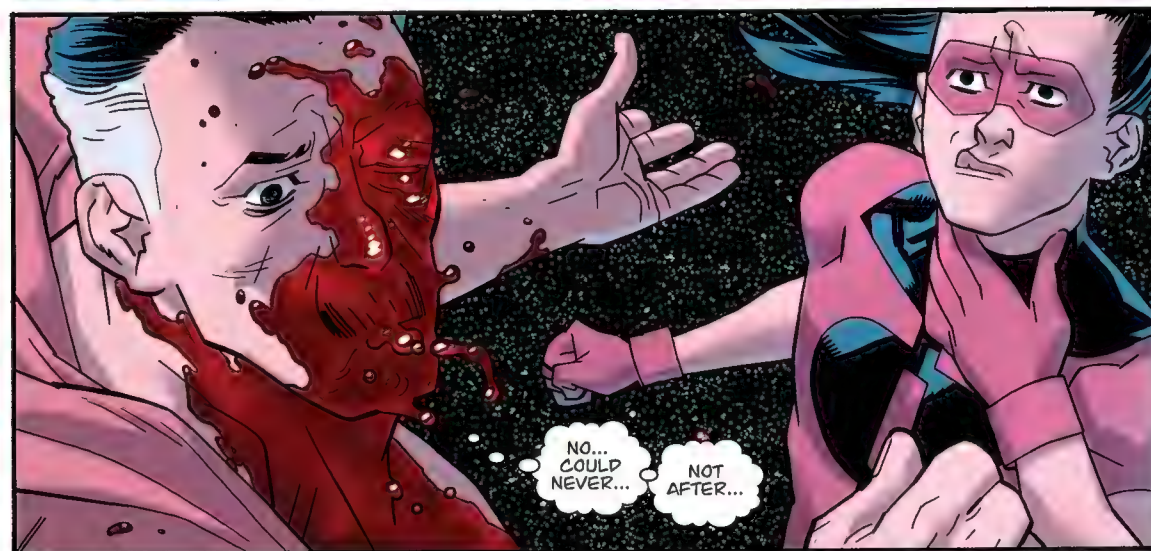
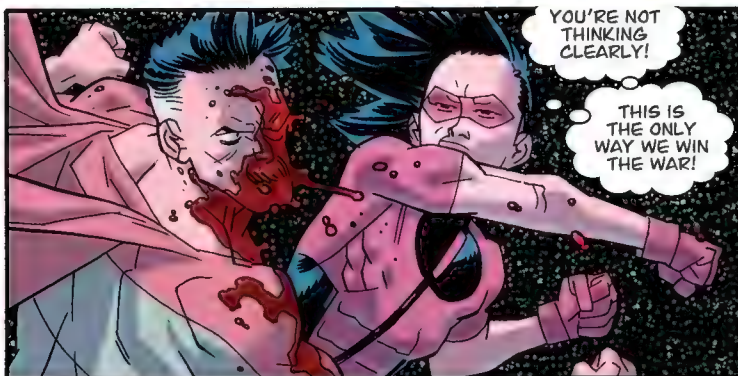
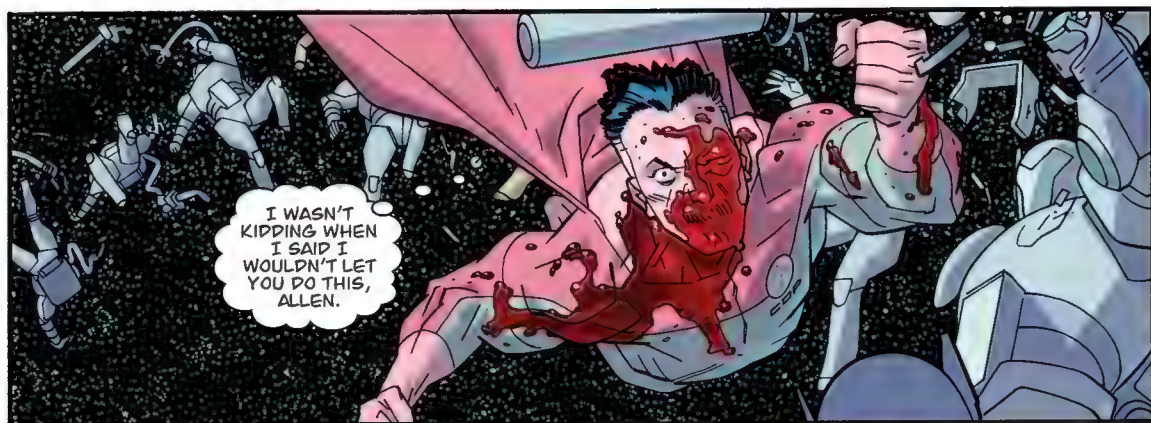
THEY'RE ASSHOLES. THEY CARE ONLY FOR TAKING WHAT THEY DON'T HAVE FROM THOSE THAT DO. THEY'RE A SMALL AND PETTY PEOPLE WHO ARE NEARLY AS ADDICTED TO VIOLENCE AS OUR RACE IS.

YOU BELIEVE VILTRUMITES WILL LEARN FROM THEM, AND BE MADE BETTER BY IT. I'M SORRY, FATHER... BUT... YOU'RE WRONG.







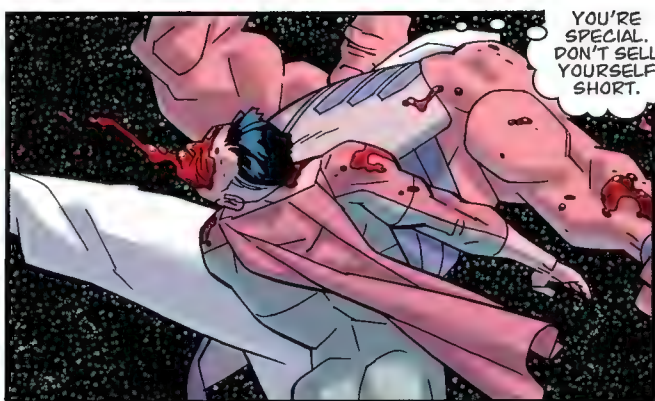




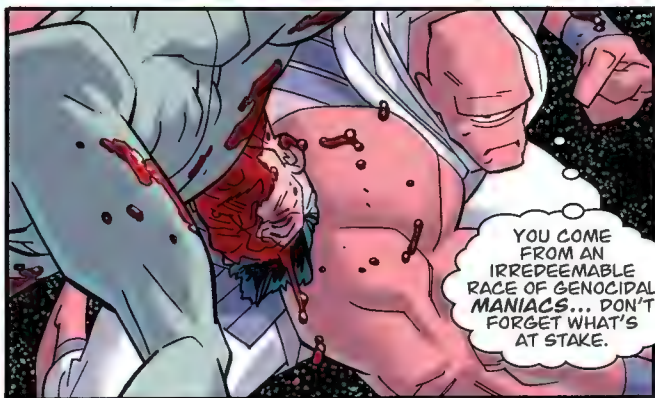


WELL, THAT WAS TOUCHING... YOU HAVE CHANGED.

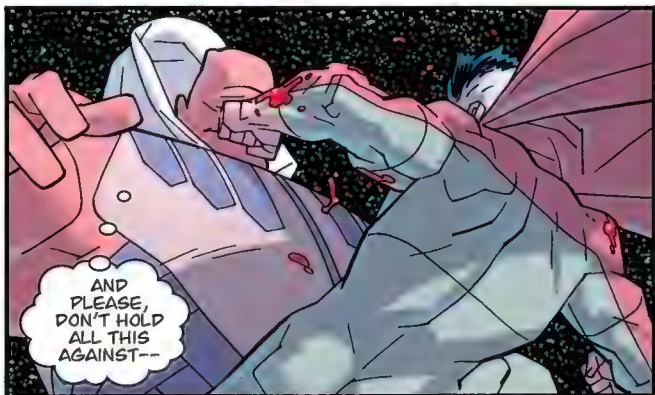
STILL, THOUGH... I'M CONVINCED YOU'RE AN ANOMALY. I JUST CAN'T SEE GRAND REGENT THRAGG MARRYING A NICE LITTLE HUMAN WOMAN AND SETTLING DOWN.



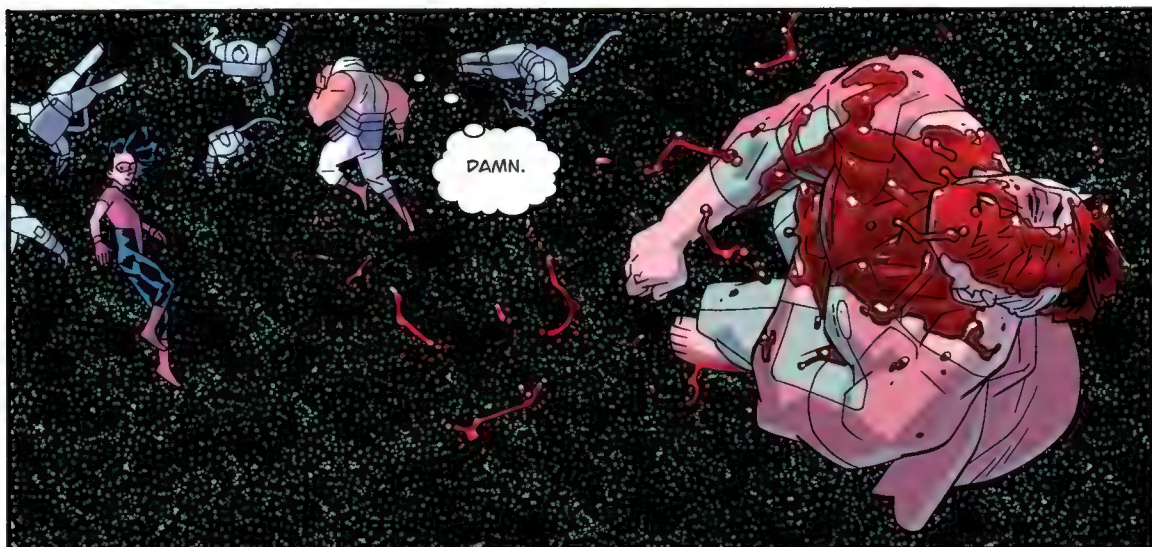
YOU'RE SPECIAL. DON'T SELL YOURSELF SHORT.



YOU COME FROM AN IRREPEEMABLE RACE OF GENOCIDAL MANIACS... DON'T FORGET WHAT'S AT STAKE.



AND PLEASE, DON'T HOLD ALL THIS AGAINST--



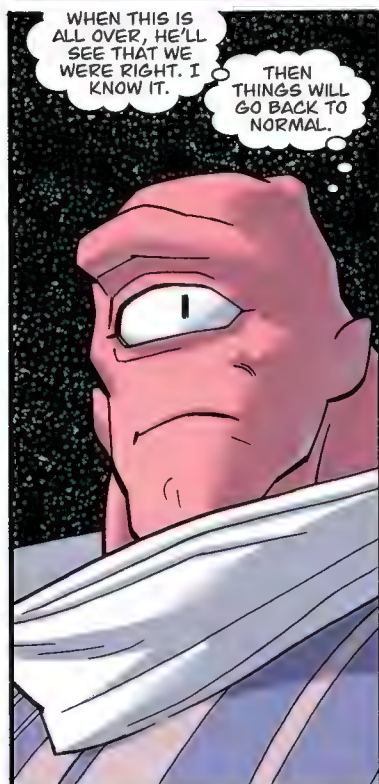
DAMN.





LET HIM GO, HE'S IN NO SHAPE TO PURSUE US ON HIS OWN. I'M SORRY, I KNOW THAT WAS HARD TO SEE. I WAS TRYING TO SUBDUDE HIM WITHOUT HURTING HIM TOO BADLY... BUT I COULD ONLY HOLD BACK SO MUCH...

I...  
I GET IT.



WHEN THIS IS ALL OVER, HE'LL SEE THAT WE WERE RIGHT. I KNOW IT.

THEN THINGS WILL GO BACK TO NORMAL.



I... HOPE YOU'RE RIGHT, ALLEN.



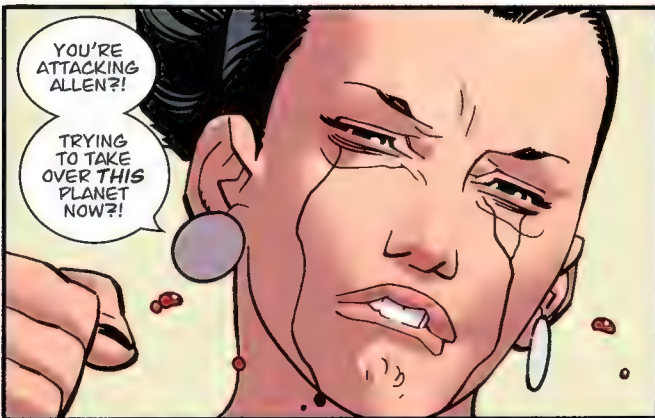
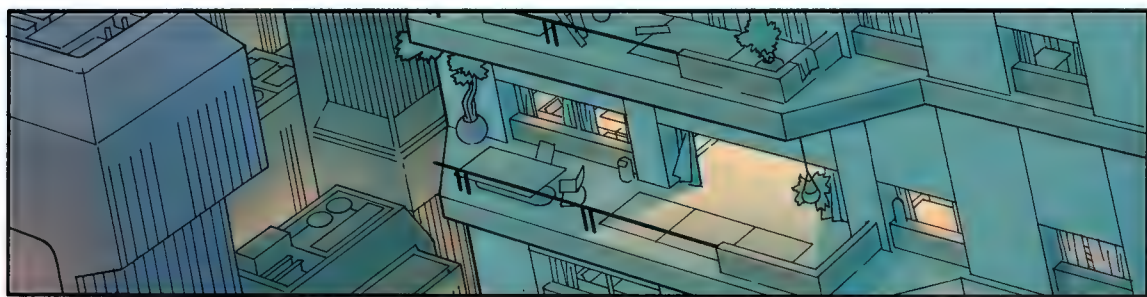
WILL YOU ACCOMPANY ME TO EARTH?

I COULD USE YOUR HELP EITHER CONVINCING MARK... OR MORE LIKELY, RESTRAINING HIM.



LET'S GO.













WE'VE  
GOT TO  
GET TO  
EARTH...

WE'VE  
GOT TO...

WE...











# CHAPTER 87







MY FIRST  
ATTEMPT TO RULE  
THIS DIMENSION  
WAS A HALF-HEARTED  
ATTEMPT, **DOOMED**  
TO FAIL FROM  
THE VERY  
START.\*

MY WORLD  
WAS DYING, ITS  
ENERGY DEPLETED,  
I WAS DESPERATE  
AND HUNGRY--I  
ENTERED YOUR  
WORLD IN MY  
DEPLETED FORM,  
TRYING IN VAIN  
TO OVERTAKE  
YOU.

I UNDERESTIMATED  
THE RESISTANCE THIS  
WORLD WOULD HAVE  
TO OFFER... BUT NOT  
**THIS TIME.**


THIS TIME  
I ENTERED YOUR  
WORLD UNDETECTED,  
SPENT **MONTHS**  
RESTORING MYSELF,  
DRAINING YOUR WORLD  
OF ENERGY WITHOUT  
DETECTION--WAITING  
FOR THE PERFECT  
MOMENT TO  
STRIKE...

\*SEE INVINCIBLE 27.







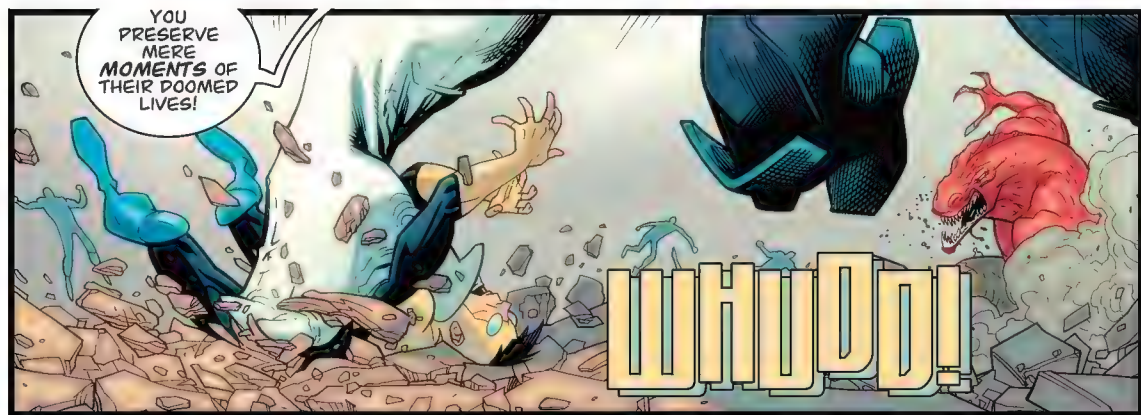
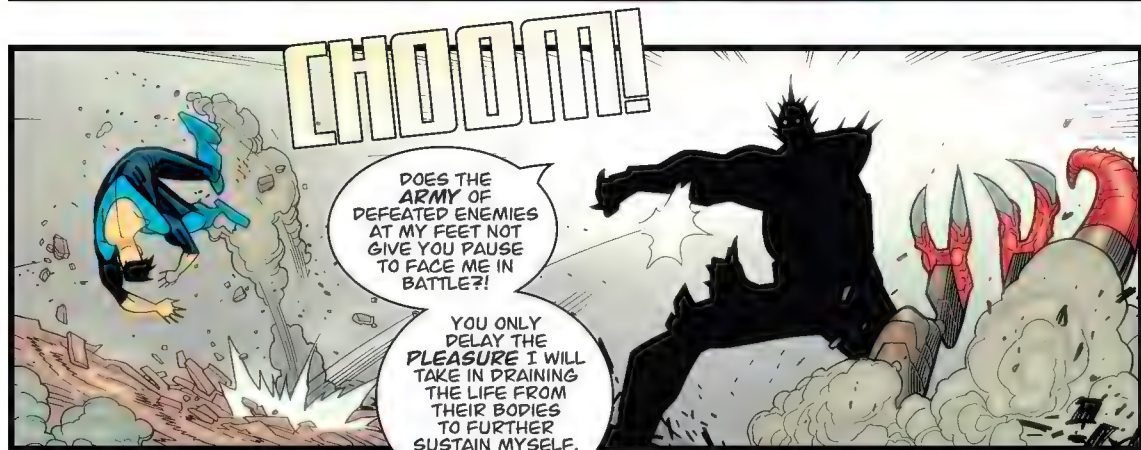


HOW LONG  
DID YOU WAIT  
TO TELL ME ABOUT  
THIS?! THESE ARE  
MY **FRIENDS!** THEY  
COULD HAVE BEEN  
**KILLED!!** SOME OF  
THEM MIGHT  
ALREADY BE  
DEAD!

THOSE  
IRRIGATION  
CHANNELS YOU  
WERE DIGGING  
WERE FAR MORE  
IMPORTANT IN  
THE GRAND  
SCHEME OF  
THINGS.

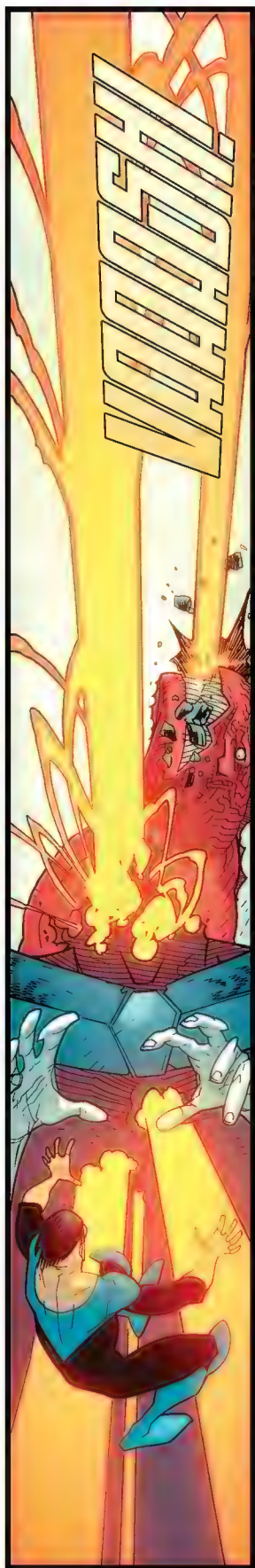
I ONLY  
ALERTED YOU  
WHEN IT  
WAS CLEAR  
WE'D BE  
NEEDED.





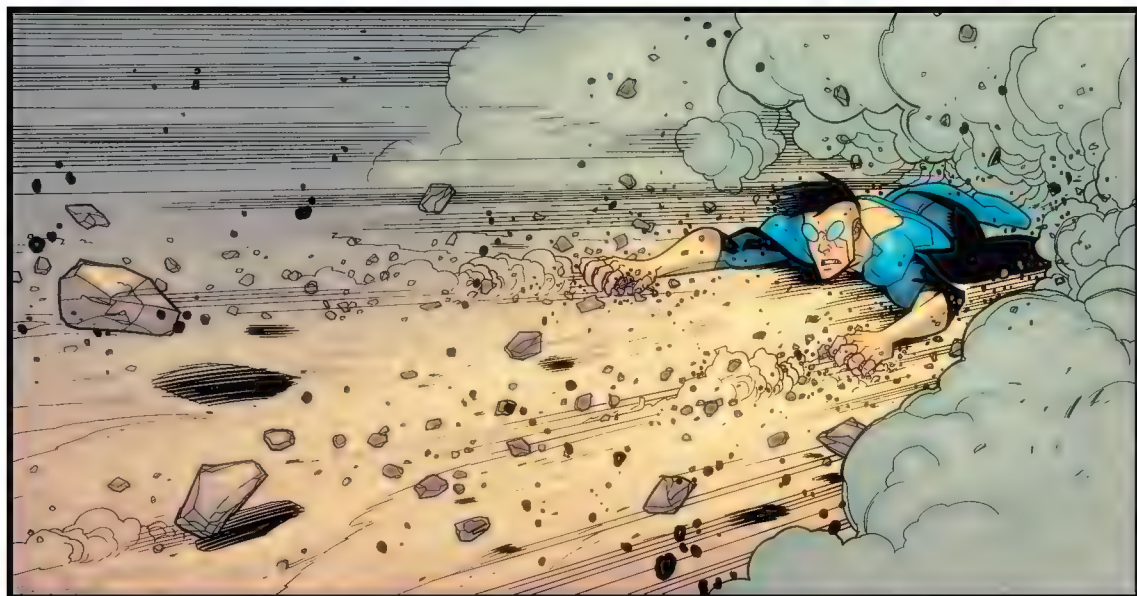


УОМПИ!

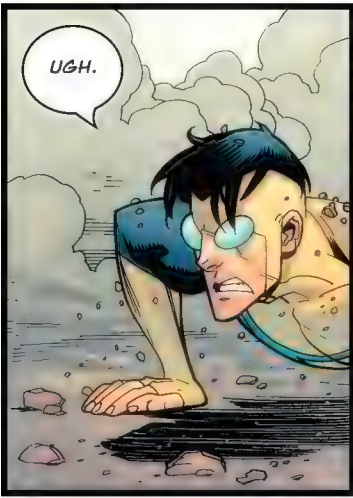


УОМПИ!

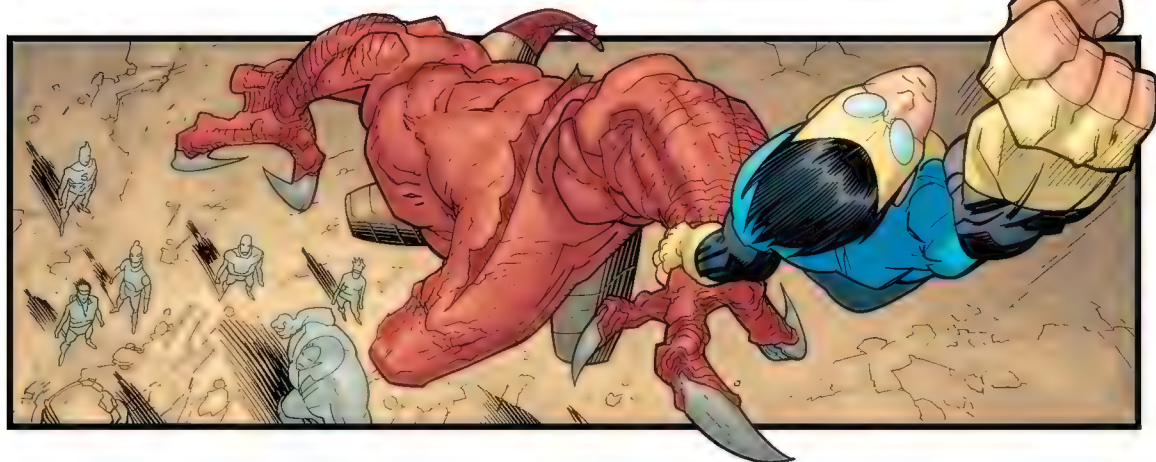
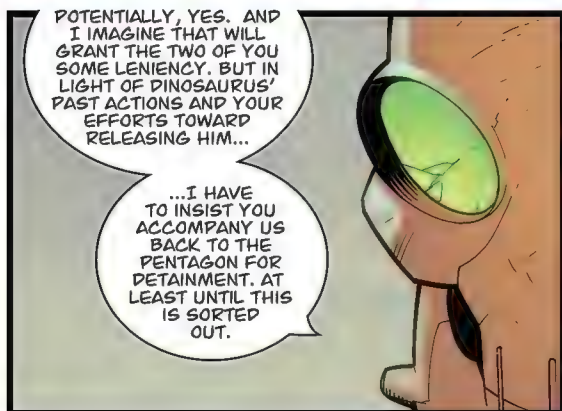
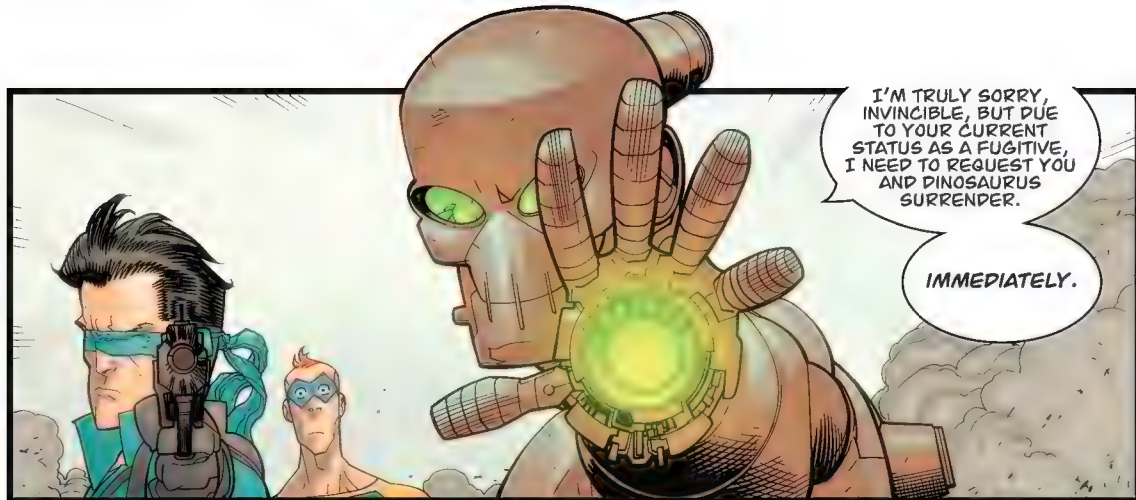




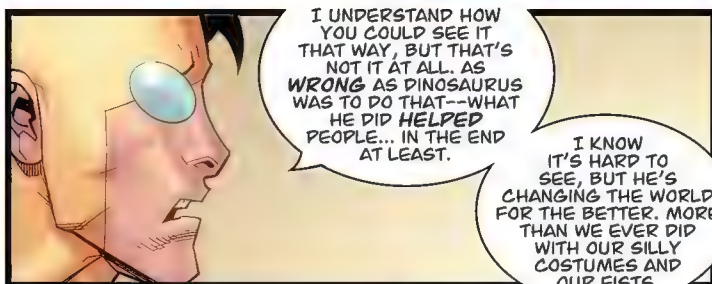




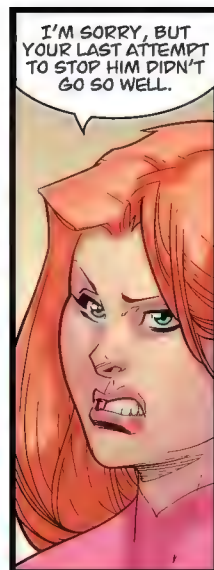
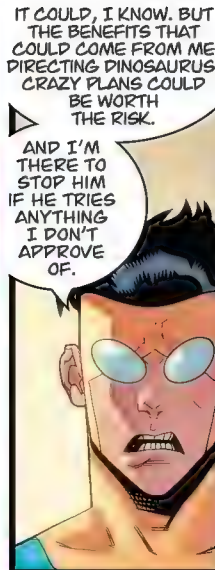
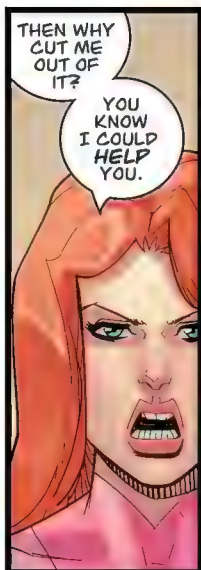




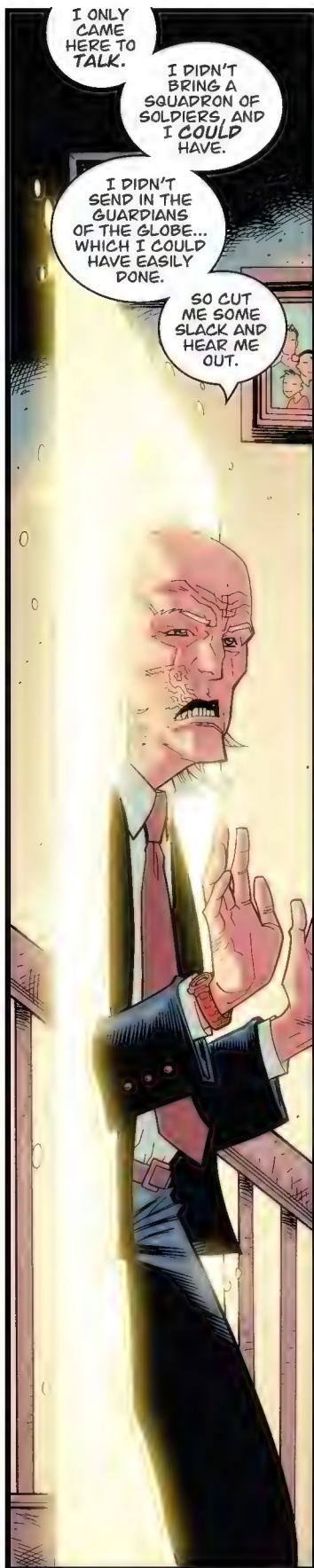












I ONLY  
CAME  
HERE TO  
TALK.

I DIDN'T  
BRING A  
SQUADRON OF  
SOLDIERS, AND  
I *COULD*  
HAVE.

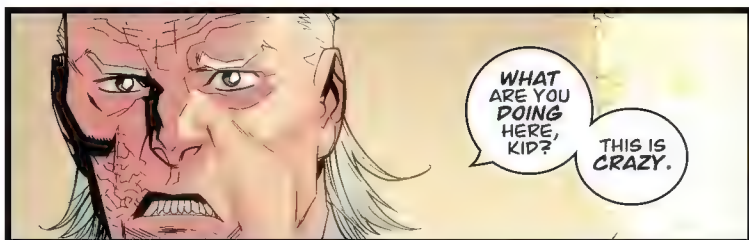
I DIDN'T  
SEND IN THE  
GUARDIANS  
OF THE GLOBE...  
WHICH I COULD  
HAVE EASILY  
DONE.

SO CUT  
ME SOME  
SLACK AND  
HEAR ME  
OUT.



I DON'T HAVE DINOSAURUS  
WITH ME. YOU WOULDN'T  
OUTRIGHT ATTACK ME  
UNLESS YOU KNEW YOU  
COULD GET HIM,  
TOO.

I FIGURED  
YOU WERE  
MONITORING  
THE PLACE. I  
ACTUALLY WANT  
TO TALK TO  
YOU.



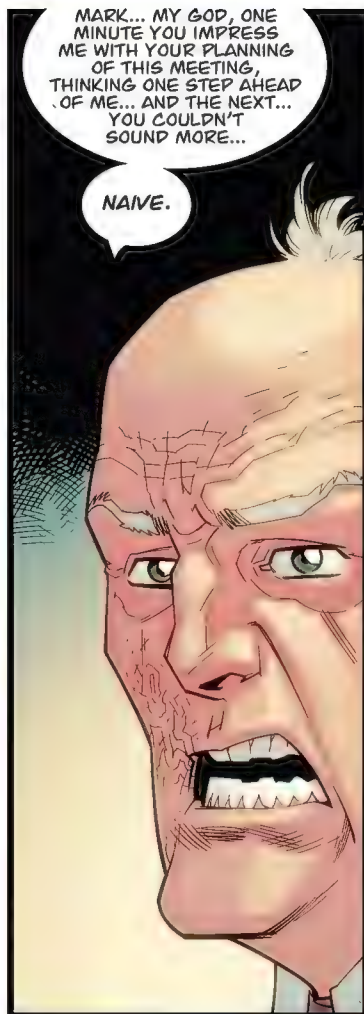
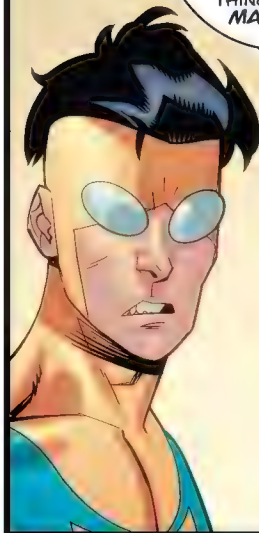
WHAT  
ARE YOU  
DOING  
HERE,  
KID?

THIS IS  
CRAZY.

YOU SAW THAT SOLAR PANEL  
ARRAY... YOU *BUILT* IT. YOU  
CAN'T ARGUE THAT IT WON'T  
HELP PEOPLE. IT'S GOING  
TO CHANGE PEOPLE'S LIVES,  
AND HELP THE WHOLE  
PLANET... AND IT COULD  
LEAD TO MORE  
LIKE IT.

DINOSAURUS  
DID THAT. HE DID  
A HORRIBLE,  
UNFORGIVABLE THING  
TO ACCOMPLISH IT--  
BUT HIS REASONING  
WAS *SOUND*.

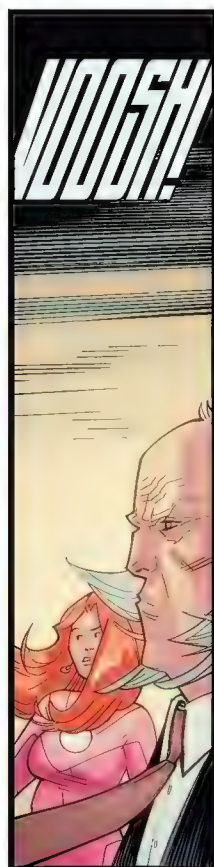
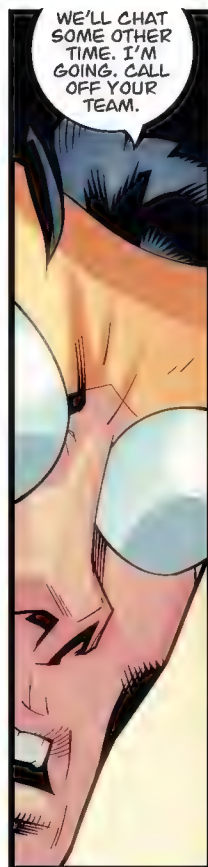
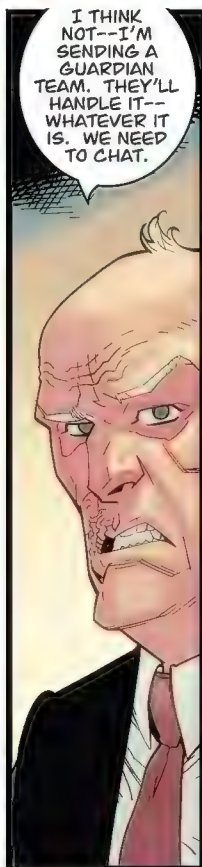
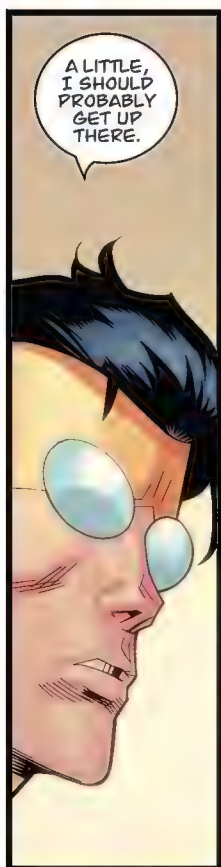
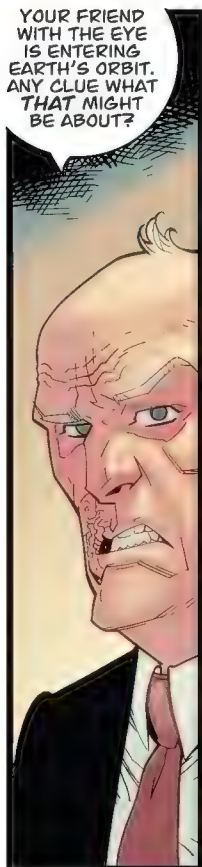
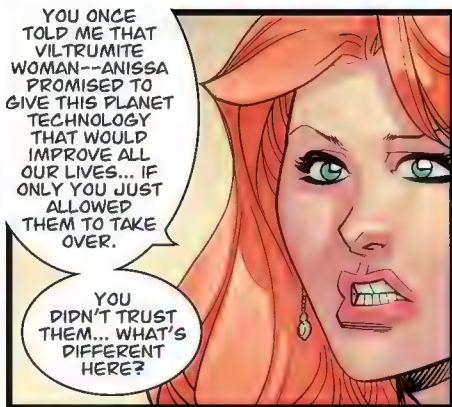
I CAN  
GUIDE HIM,  
PREVENT HIM  
FROM CARRYING  
OUT HIS PLANS IN A  
WAY THAT HURTS  
PEOPLE... AND HE  
CAN HELP ME DO  
THINGS THAT  
ACTUALLY HELP  
PEOPLE...  
THINGS THAT  
*MATTER*.



MARK... MY GOD, ONE  
MINUTE YOU IMPRESS  
ME WITH YOUR PLANNING  
OF THIS MEETING,  
THINKING ONE STEP AHEAD  
OF ME... AND THE NEXT...  
YOU COULDN'T  
SOUND MORE...

NAVE.











WOW, THEY'VE GOT YOU BACK IN ONE PIECE-- YOU'D NEVER KNOW ANYTHING HAPPENED!

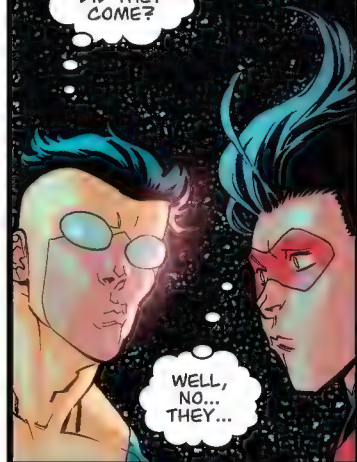


YEAH, THEY GREW MY SKIN OVER NEW MECHANICAL PARTS. THEY ALMOST FEEL NORMAL.

I DON'T MEAN TO INTERRUPT THIS REUNION, BUT WE'RE HERE FOR A REASON...



WHERE'S MOM AND DAD? DID THEY COME?



WELL, NO... THEY...

THEY REMAINED ON TALESCRIA. THERE'S A LOT TO DISCUSS. YOUR FATHER INFORMED ME OF THE VILTRUMITES' STATUS HERE ON EARTH, AND...



I'VE DEVISED A PLAN I NEED TO RUN PAST YOU.





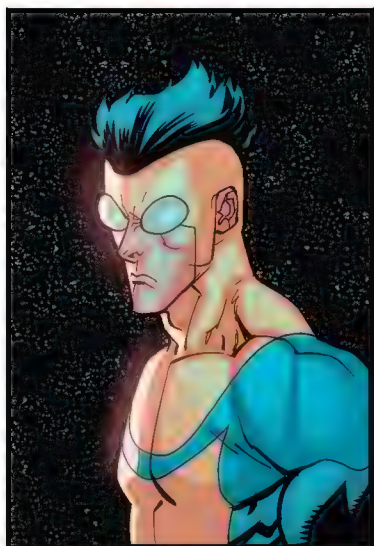


HAVE YOU  
LOST YOUR  
MIND?!



MARK, PLEASE. JUST  
THINK THIS THROUGH...  
I UNDERSTAND YOUR  
INITIAL REACTION, BUT  
YOU NEED TO WEIGH  
THIS AGAINST THE  
ATROCITIES THE  
VILTRUMITES HAVE  
COMMITTED  
ALL OVER THE  
UNIVERSE.

JUST  
CONSIDER  
IT...



THIS SEEMS  
WRONG AT FIRST,  
BUT IT'S NOT. IT'S  
THE ONLY WAY WE  
CAN SAVE THE  
UNIVERSE. THIS  
FIXES EVERYTHING.



NO... IT  
DOESN'T.

IF THERE'S  
EVEN THE  
SLIGHTEST CHANCE  
THIS SCOURGE VIRUS  
YOU HAVE WILL AFFECT  
HUMANS... AND IT SOUNDS  
LIKE IT'S PRETTY MUCH  
CERTAIN... THERE'S  
NO WAY YOU CAN  
DO THIS.

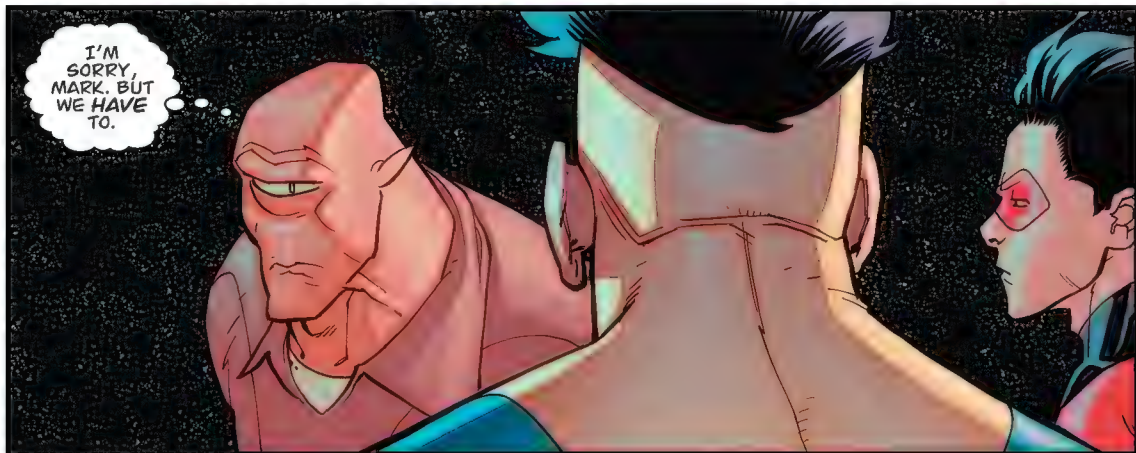
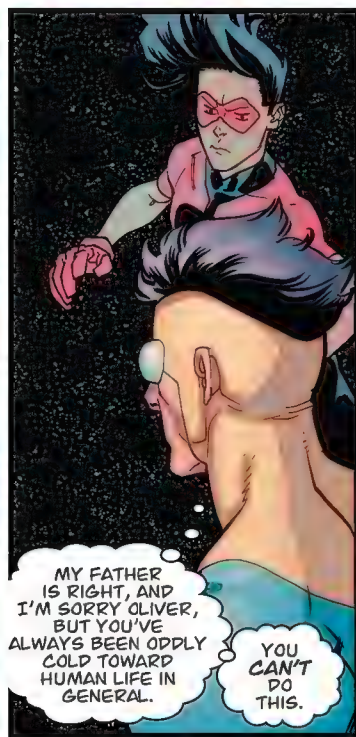
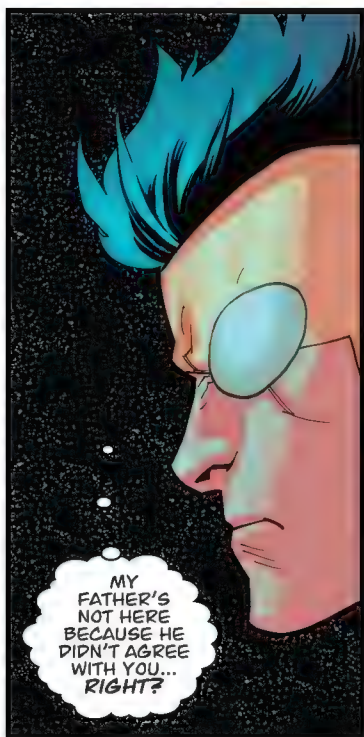
ALLEN, THE  
VILTRUMITES  
KILLED NEARLY  
ALL OF YOUR  
PEOPLE...  
HOW IS THIS  
DIFFERENT?



IT'S DIFFERENT BECAUSE  
ONCE THE VILTRUMITES  
FEEL THEIR NUMBERS ARE  
SUFFICIENT AND THEY'RE  
THROUGH INTERBREEDING  
WITH EARTH THEY WILL  
RESUME THEIR MISSION  
OF UNIVERSAL  
CONQUEST.

THEN MORE  
PEOPLE, LIKE MINE,  
WILL BE PUSHED TO  
THE BRINK OF EXTINCTION...  
AND THAT'S ONLY THE  
BEGINNING. THINK OF  
WHAT THEY DID WITH THEIR  
NUMBERS DWINDLING.  
HOW MUCH WORSE WILL  
THINGS BE WITH  
THEIR FULL POWER  
RESTORED?

IF I CAUSE  
THE EXTINCTION  
OF HUMANITY IN  
ORDER TO RID US OF  
THE VILTRUMITES--  
THAT'S IT. IT STOPS  
HERE AND THE HUMAN  
RACE BECOMES A  
WORTHY SACRIFICE  
FOR THE GOOD OF  
ALL LIFE IN THE  
UNIVERSE.







DON'T ACT  
SURPRISED,  
ALLEN.

YOU KNEW I  
COULD NEVER  
LET YOU DO  
SOMETHING  
LIKE THIS.

IN FACT, I'M  
ALMOST CERTAIN  
THAT SOMEWHERE,  
DEEP INSIDE, YOU  
WANT ME TO  
STOP YOU!

DON'T  
BET ON  
IT!



AND YOU--  
DON'T **DO**  
THIS, OLIVER.  
HELP ME STOP  
ALLEN.

THERE ARE  
PEOPLE ON THAT  
PLANET YOU KNOW--  
AND COUNTLESS  
OTHERS WHO ARE  
**INNOCENT**. THEY  
DON'T DESERVE TO DIE!

THIS  
ISN'T  
ABOUT  
THEM!

OLIVER IS  
RIGHT--  
BUT ENOUGH  
ARGUING!  
YOU'RE  
WASTING  
TIME!

THIS HAS  
TO BE DONE  
QUICKLY--IT HAS  
TO BE DONE **NOW**!  
BEFORE THEY GET  
A CHANCE TO  
DETECT WHAT'S  
HAPPENING!

YOU NEED  
TO JUST LET  
THIS HAPPEN.  
TRUST THAT I KNOW  
WHAT IS BEST. I  
WAS MADE HEAD OF  
THE COALITION OF  
PLANETS FOR  
A REASON.

BESIDES--  
NOLAN  
COULDN'T  
STOP ME.

WHAT  
CHANCE  
DO YOU  
HAVE?!





HE  
HAS  
ME.







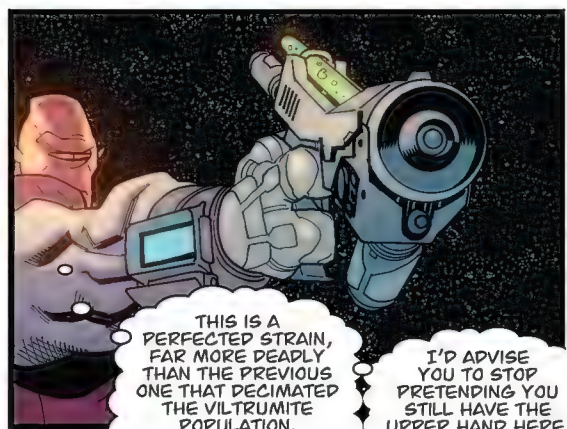
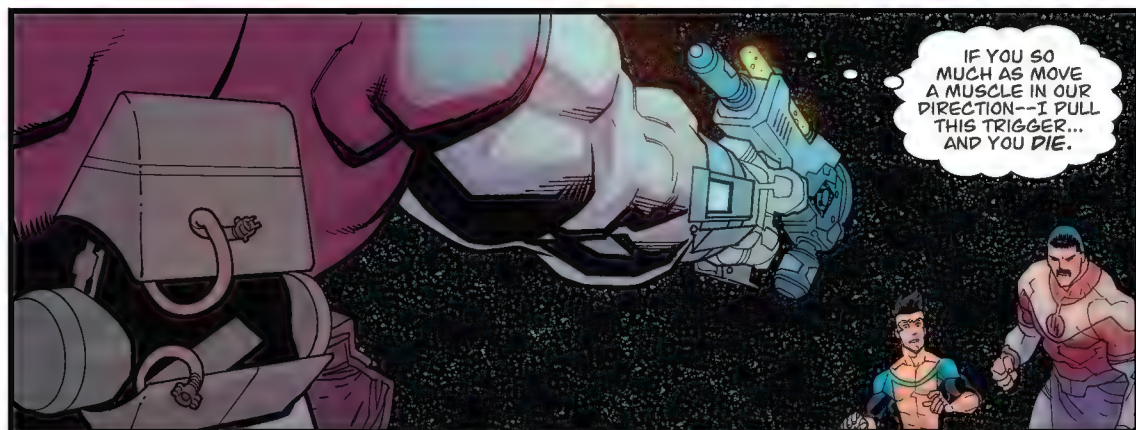
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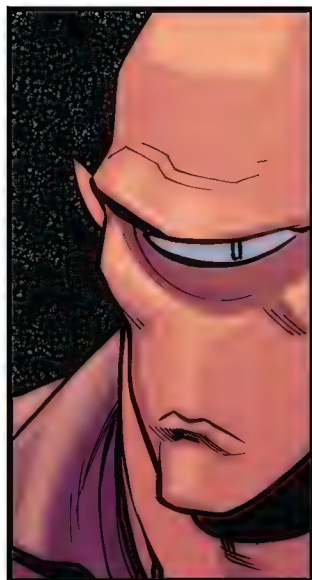




OKAY, SO  
IT'S OVER, RIGHT?  
ALLEN--YOU'RE  
PACKING IT IN AND  
GOING HOME?

THRAGG KNOWS--  
YOU'RE NOT CATCHING  
THEM BY SURPRISE--  
YOU RELEASE THIS THING  
INTO EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE  
NOW AND THEY JUST TAKE  
OFF, LEAVING THE PLANET  
BEFORE THE VIRUS  
SPREADS.

SO THAT'S  
IT--YOUR  
PLAN IS  
OFFICIALLY  
FOILED.



COME ON,  
GUYS... LET'S  
NOT DO  
ANYTHING  
CRAZY,  
OKAY?

I'M SO  
TOTALLY  
**UNPREPARED**  
FOR CRAZY  
RIGHT NOW.

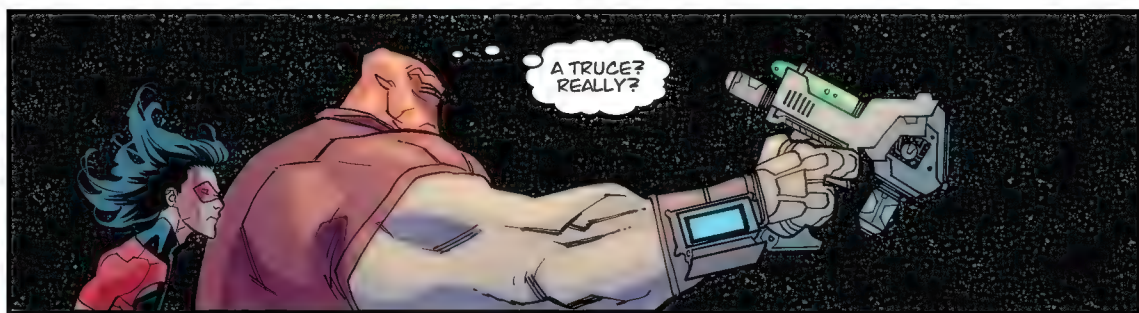


LET ME  
BE CLEAR.  
THERE WILL  
BE NO FIGHT  
HERE... NOT  
NOW.


AS THE NEW HEAD OF THE  
COALITION OF PLANETS, ALLEN...  
I UNDERSTAND THAT YOU ARE  
UNDER TREMENDOUS PRESSURE...  
AND NEED TO PROVE YOURSELF  
WORTHY OF THE  
APPOINTMENT.

I WOULD  
LIKE TO  
PROPOSE A  
TRUCE.









SO AGAIN, I PROPOSE A TRUCE. WE OCCUPY THIS PLANET, IT'S NOT A HOSTILE OCCUPATION, OUR PRESENCE IS LARGELY UNKNOWN BY THE POPULATION. YOU ARE UNCOMFORTABLE WITH IT... BUT I AM UNCOMFORTABLE WITH YOU HAVING THE SCOURGE VIRUS IN HAND, AT THE READY.

YOU HAVE THE ABILITY TO STRIKE AT US WITH THIS VIRUS AT ANY TIME. WE HAVE THE ABILITY TO SLAUGHTER EVERY LIVING THING ON THIS PLANET--AND RESUME OUR WAR WITH THE COALITION.

WE ARE IN A STANDOFF. I SAY WE ALLOW OUR POSITION TO REMAIN AS SUCH, WITH EACH PARTY KEEPING THE OTHER IN CHECK.

WE WILL LIVE HERE, NOTHING MORE... AND IN RETURN, YOU WILL NOT ATTEMPT TO KILL US.




I DON'T KNOW THAT I CAN MAKE THAT WORK.



LET ME HELP YOU. YOU ARE BACKED INTO A CORNER.

YOU HAVE NO CHOICE.



THE HELL WE DON'T! I'M WILLING TO BET YOUR PEOPLE ARE IN DEEP COVER... I BET THIS VIRUS WOULD GET TO THEM BEFORE THEY COULD GET OFF WORLD, WE MAY NOT GET ALL OF YOU, BUT--

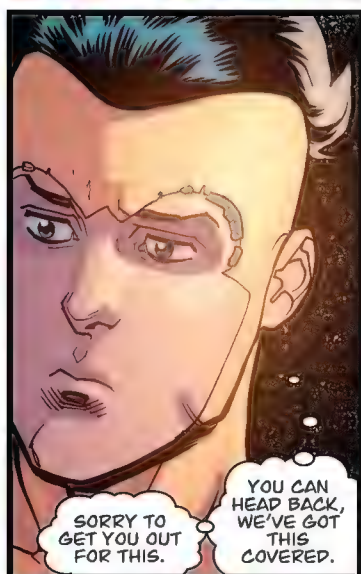
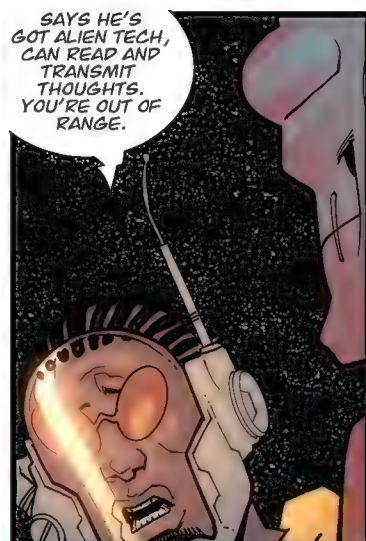
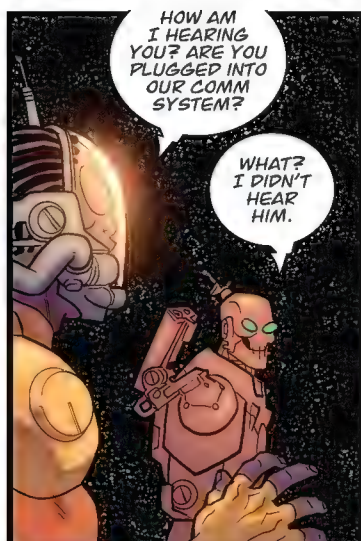
OLIVER... STOP.

THRAGG IS RIGHT.

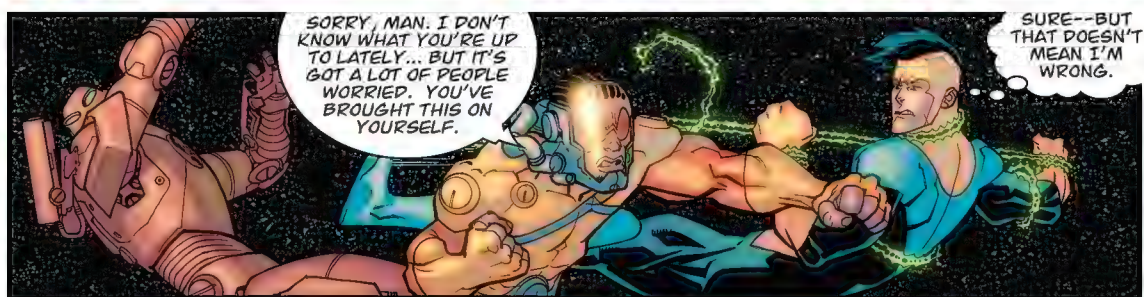




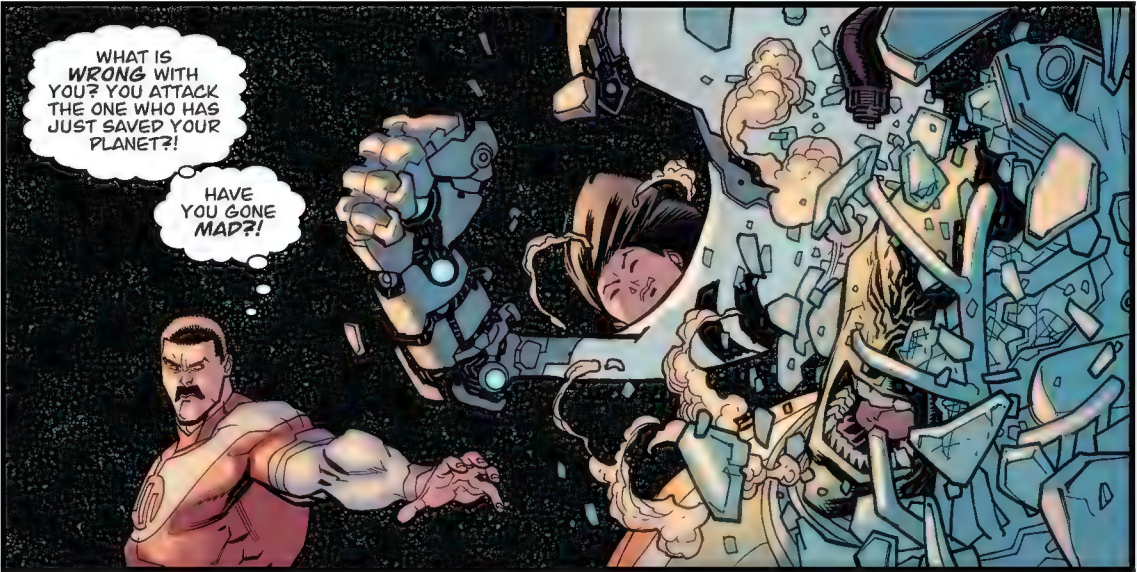




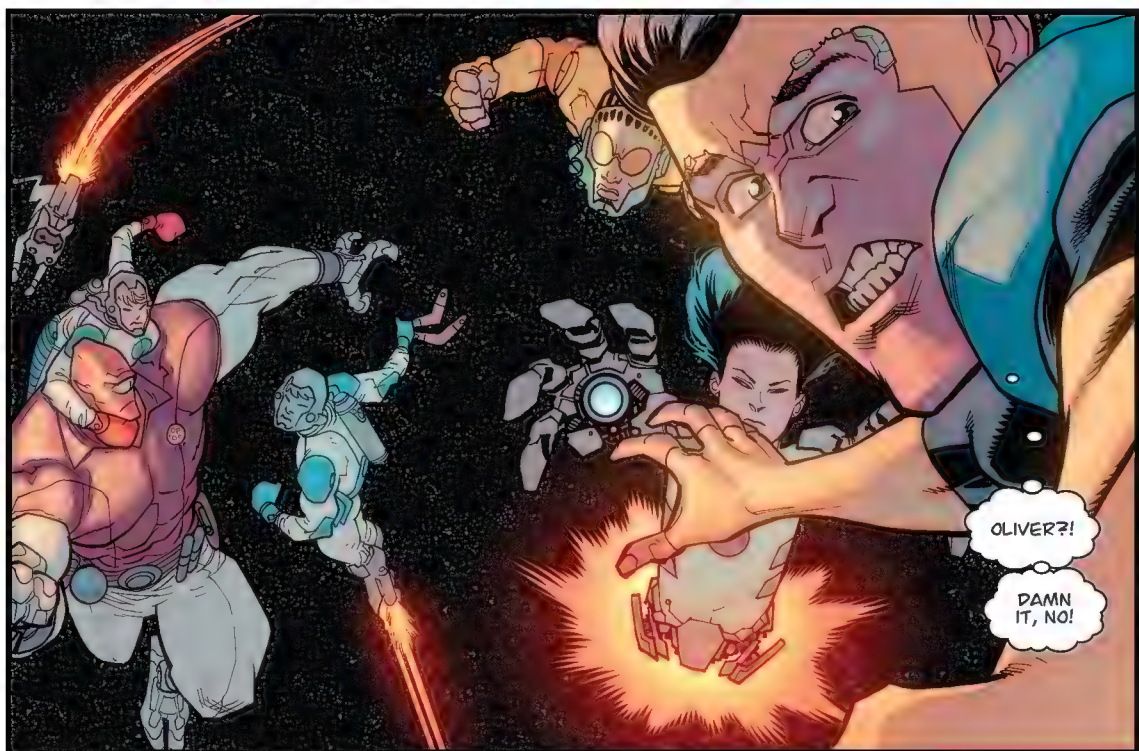
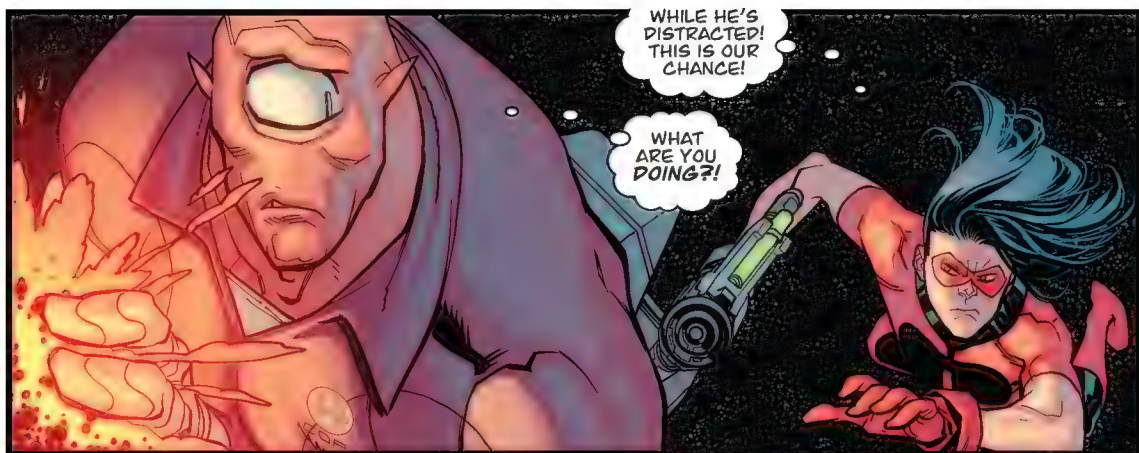




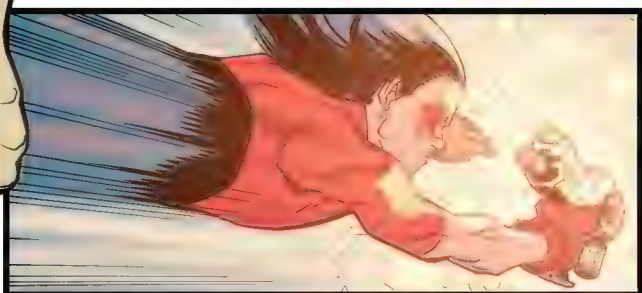
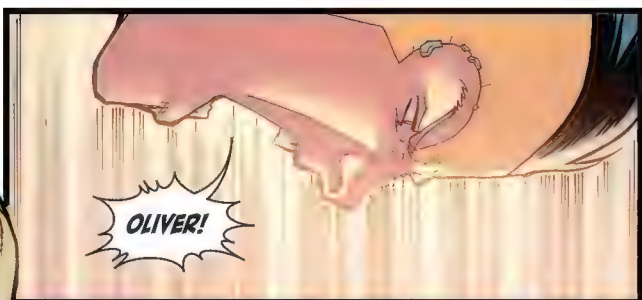
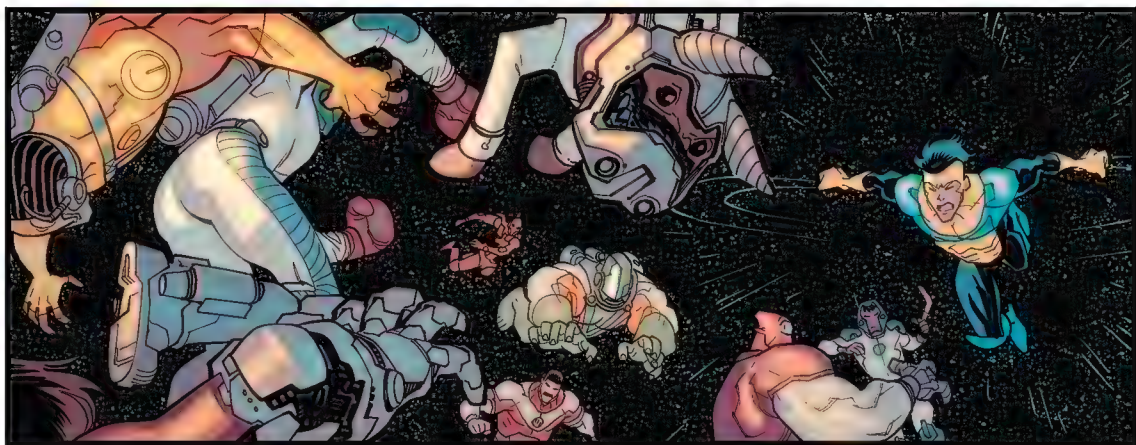




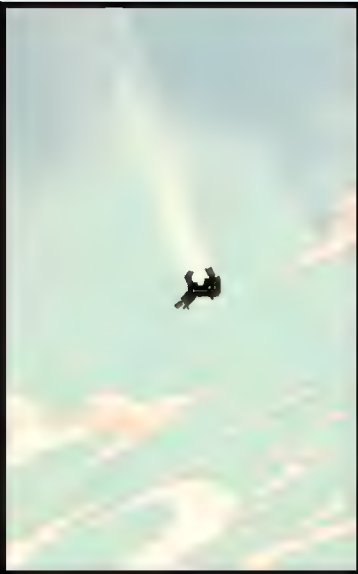






















I'M THROUGH ARGUING  
WITH YOU ABOUT THIS!  
I'M SICK OF IT! YOU'RE  
WRONG! AND NOW  
YOU'VE GOT ALLEN  
RECONSIDERING---

THIS  
HAS TO BE  
DONE!

NO,  
OLIVER...  
JUST...

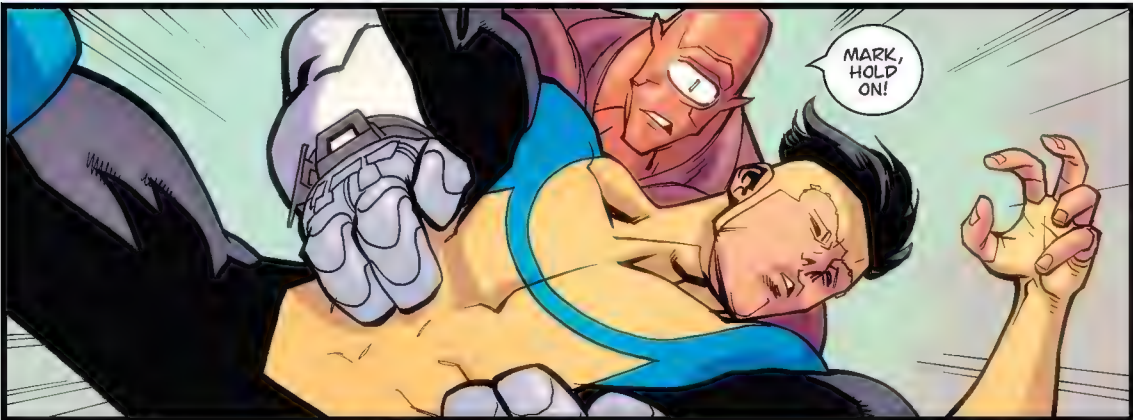
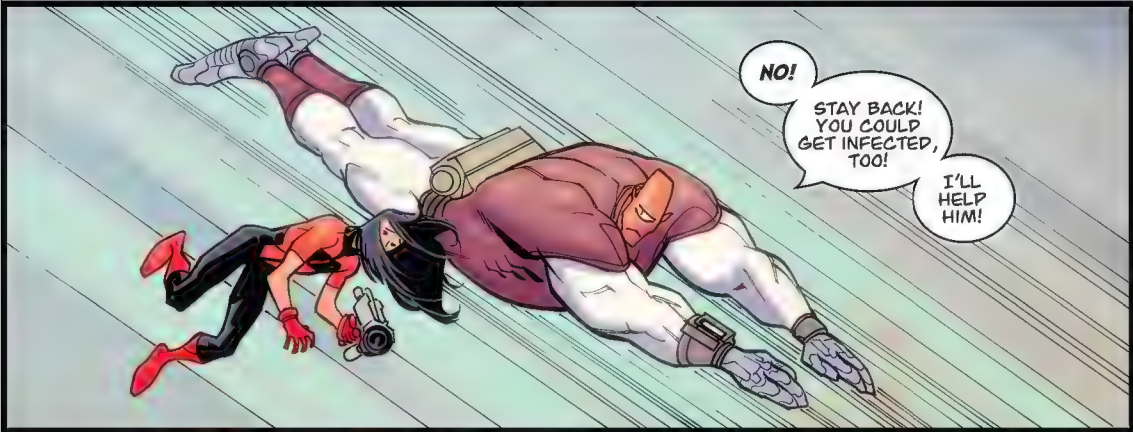
PLEASE.



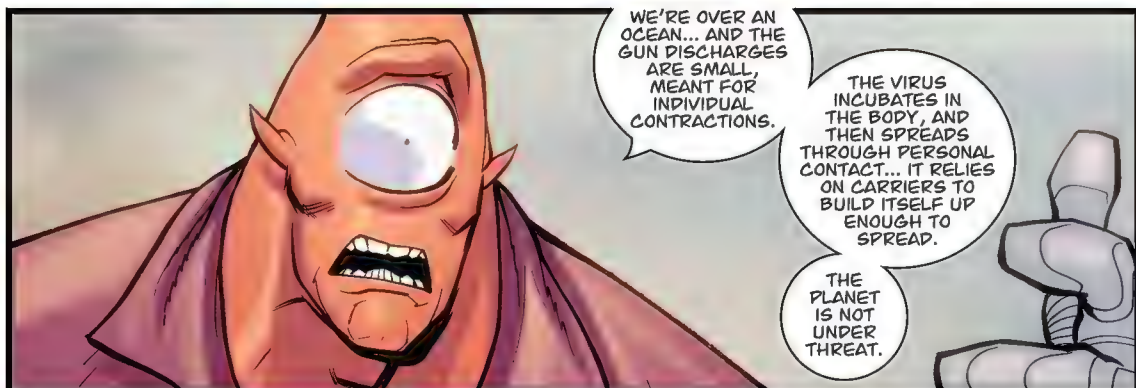




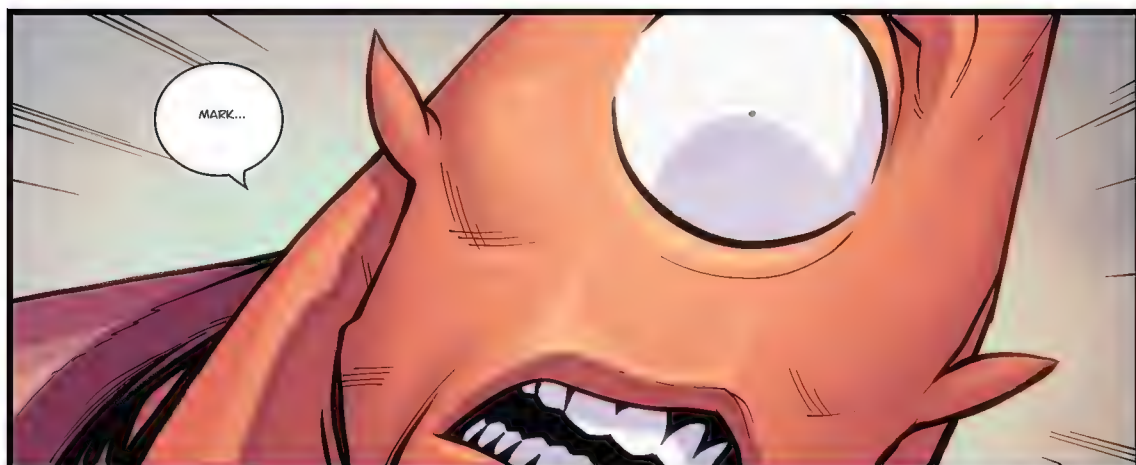
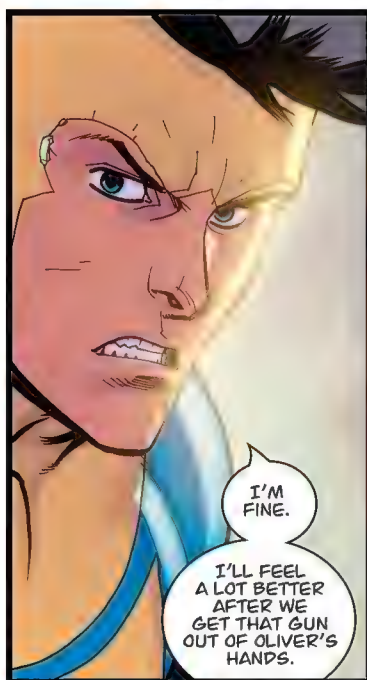
















WHAT?

ALLEN,  
I'M FINE.



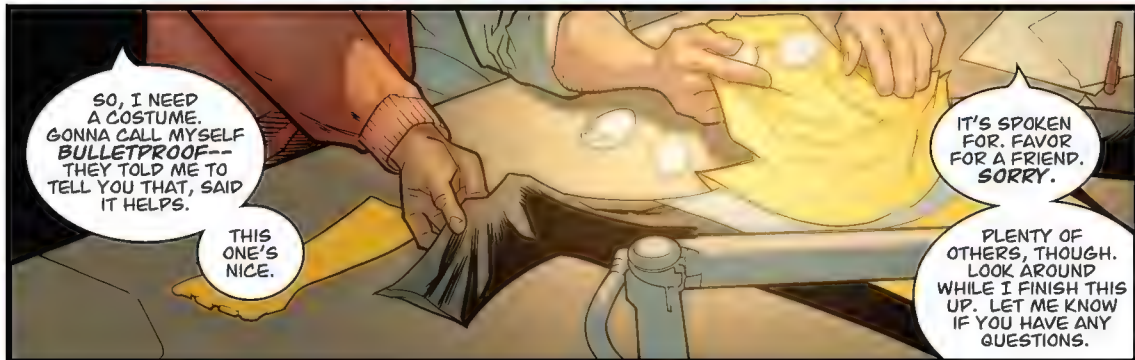
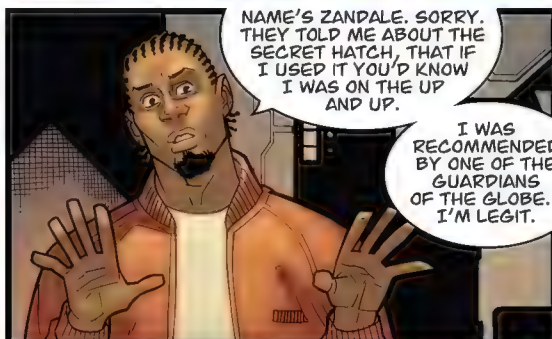




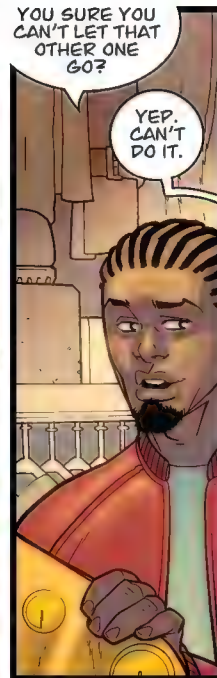
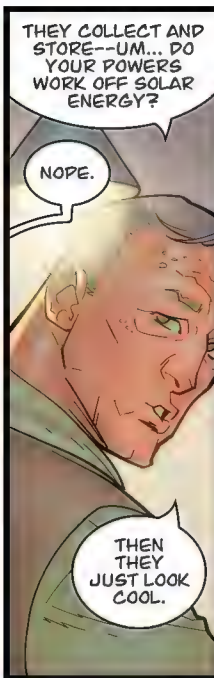
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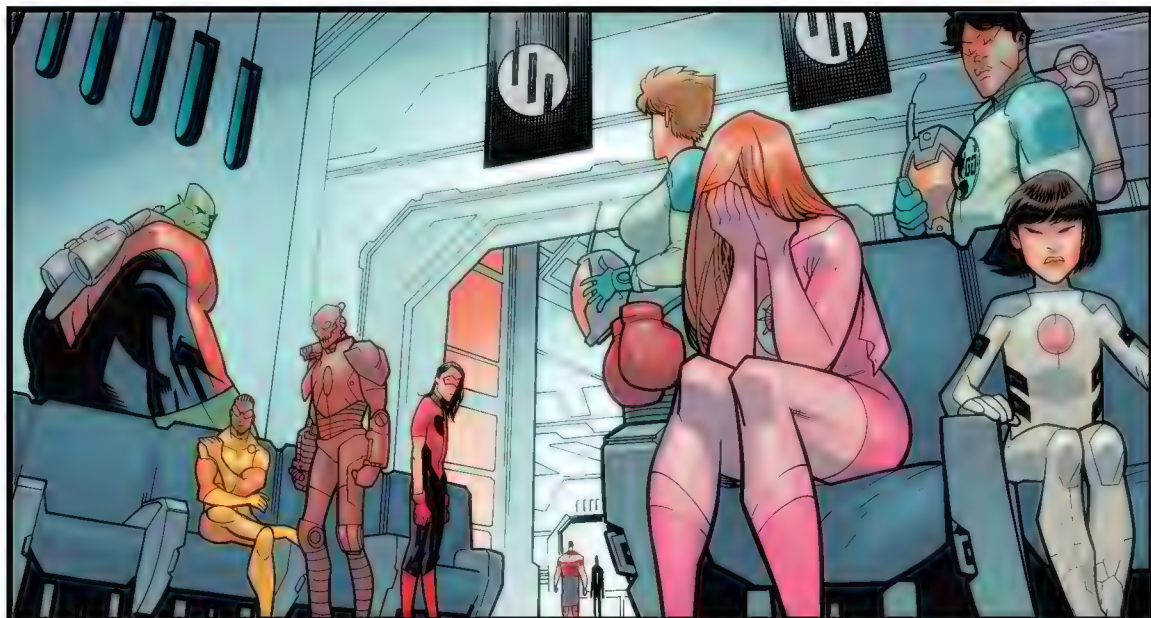








THE DARK SIDE OF THE MOON.



SO, YOU ARE  
THE ONE WHO  
IS IN CHARGE  
OF PLANET  
EARTH?

NOT  
HOW I'D  
PUT IT.

IN  
CHARGE  
OF ITS  
**PROTECTION**,  
YES. I'M NOT  
RUNNING THE  
SHOW OR  
ANYTHING.



I HAVE A MOON BASE  
NOT TWO HUNDRED  
MILES FROM HERE, AND  
WE DID NOT DETECT THIS  
SHIP. HOW LONG  
HAVE YOU BEEN  
HERE?

MONTHS.  
I GATHER  
MARK GRAYSON  
DIDN'T TELL  
YOU ABOUT OUR  
AGREEMENT. FOR  
THE BETTER,  
REALLY.

AND  
I'M JUST  
SUPPOSED TO  
ALLOW ALL  
THIS? WHAT  
ARE YOU  
DOING HERE?





YOU SIMPLY  
HAVE NO **CHOICE**  
IN THE MATTER.  
THERE IS NOTHING YOU  
CAN DO. YOU DID NOT  
DETECT OUR PRESENCE  
HERE, BECAUSE OUR  
TECHNOLOGY IS **VASTLY**  
MORE ADVANCED  
THAN YOURS.

YOU MUST  
HONOR THE  
AGREEMENT WE  
HAVE WITH MARK.  
OTHERWISE, WE  
WILL **DESTROY**  
YOU.

WE WILL  
COEXIST IN  
PEACE BECAUSE  
TO DO OTHERWISE  
WOULD DRAW THE  
ATTENTION OF THE  
COALITION OF PLANETS,  
WHICH COULD LEAD TO  
THE EXTINCTION OF  
MY PEOPLE.

AND, IT  
APPEARS,  
**YOURS** AS  
WELL.

AS TO  
OUR CURRENT  
SITUATION. WE  
HAVE DEALT WITH  
THE SCOURGE  
VIRUS BEFORE.  
WE KNOW HOW  
TO HANDLE  
IT.



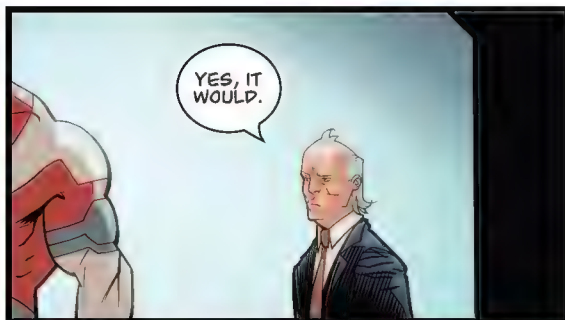


WE ARE THE BOY'S ONLY CHANCE OF SURVIVAL. HIS LIFE RESTS IN OUR HANDS.

WE WILL DO EVERYTHING WE CAN TO SAVE HIM, DESPITE OUR HISTORY AS BITTER ENEMIES.

WE WILL DO THIS TO SHOW HIM THAT WE ARE BETTER THAN THE COALITION, WHO CAUSED HIS CURRENT SITUATION.

BUT ALSO OUT OF RESPECT FOR HIM, AND BECAUSE IF WE DO ALLOW HIM TO DIE, I IMAGINE THAT WOULD CREATE TENSION BETWEEN US AND THE PEOPLE OF YOUR PLANET, *YOU* CHIEF AMONG THEM.



YES, IT WOULD.



YOU SHOULD KNOW, HIS CONDITION WILL GET WORSE BEFORE IT GETS BETTER. HE IS ONLY IN THE EARLY STAGES OF THE VIRUS.

AND THIS IS A NEW, **STRONGER** STRAIN. WE'RE NOT YET COMPLETELY SURE OF WHAT WE'RE DEALING WITH.

WE ARE NOT CERTAIN HE WILL SURVIVE.

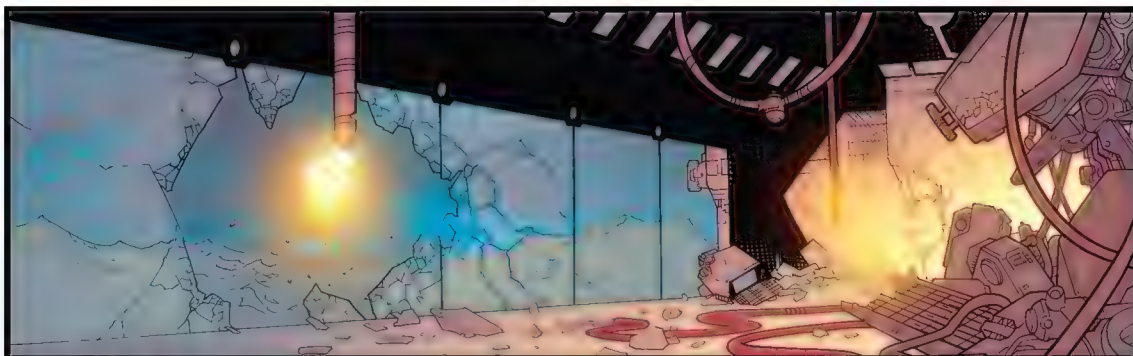
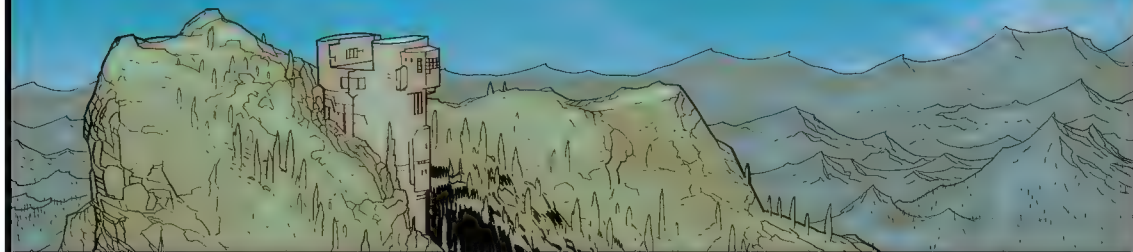


PLEASE...

...DO EVERYTHING YOU CAN.



UNDISCLOSED LOCATION,  
THE SECRET BASE OF  
DINOSAURUS.





IT WOULD  
APPEAR WE  
ARE MORE OR  
LESS EVENLY  
MATCHED.

ACTUALLY,  
I'VE BEEN  
RESTRAINING  
MYSELF QUITE  
A BIT THIS  
ENTIRE  
TIME.

I HAVE NO  
INTENTION OF  
HURTING YOU.  
I'M FRIENDS  
WITH  
INVINCIBLE.

IT WOULD  
APPEAR WE  
ARE MORE OR  
LESS EVENLY  
MATCHED.

ACTUALLY,  
I'VE BEEN  
RESTRAINING  
MYSELF QUITE  
A BIT THIS  
ENTIRE  
TIME.

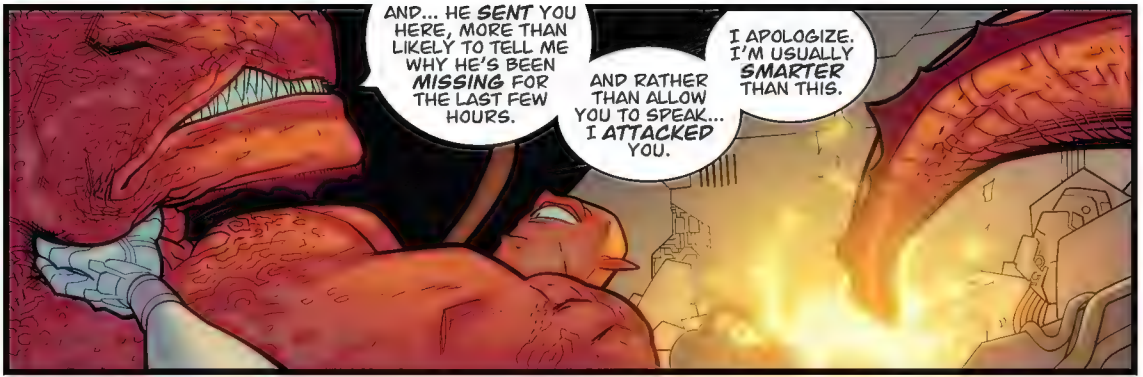
I HAVE NO  
INTENTION OF  
HURTING YOU.  
I'M FRIENDS  
WITH  
INVINCIBLE.

IT WOULD  
APPEAR WE  
ARE MORE OR  
LESS EVENLY  
MATCHED.

ACTUALLY,  
I'VE BEEN  
RESTRAINING  
MYSELF QUITE  
A BIT THIS  
ENTIRE  
TIME.

I HAVE NO  
INTENTION OF  
HURTING YOU.  
I'M FRIENDS  
WITH  
INVINCIBLE.

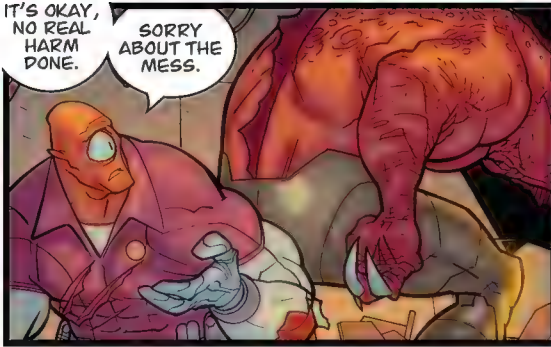




AND... HE SENT YOU  
HERE, MORE THAN  
LIKELY TO TELL ME  
WHY HE'S BEEN  
MISSING FOR  
THE LAST FEW  
HOURS.

AND RATHER  
THAN ALLOW  
YOU TO SPEAK...  
I ATTACKED  
YOU.

I APOLOGIZE.  
I'M USUALLY  
SMARTER  
THAN THIS.



IT'S OKAY,  
NO REAL  
HARM  
DONE.

SORRY  
ABOUT THE  
MESS.



YOU HAVE TO UNDERSTAND,  
I'VE NOT HAD MANY  
DEALINGS WITH ACTUAL  
ALIENS FROM OTHER  
PLANETS.

YOUR  
APPEARANCE  
STARTLED ME.

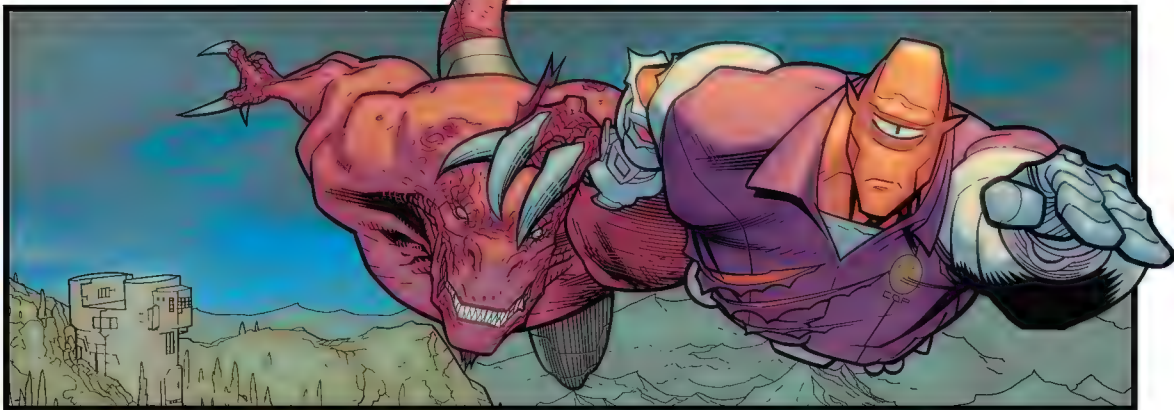


MY  
APPEARANCE--?!

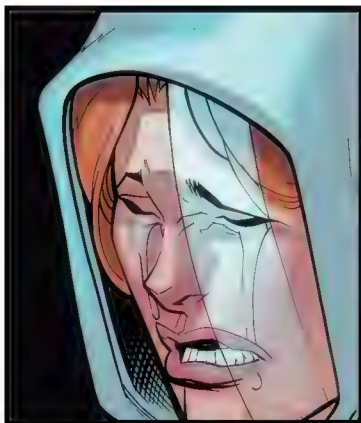
THIS WAS NO PICNIC FOR  
ME EITHER, MAN. YOU  
LOOK TOO MUCH LIKE  
A RAGNAR.

WHAT'S A--  
NEVER MIND.  
WHY ARE YOU  
HERE? WHAT'S  
GOING ON WITH  
INVINCIBLE?

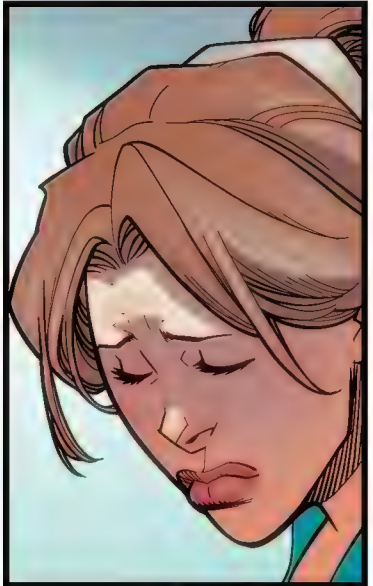
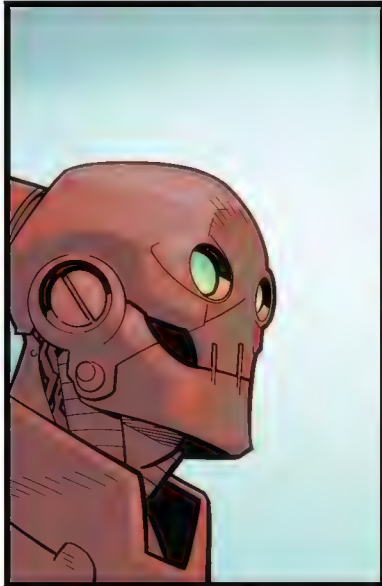
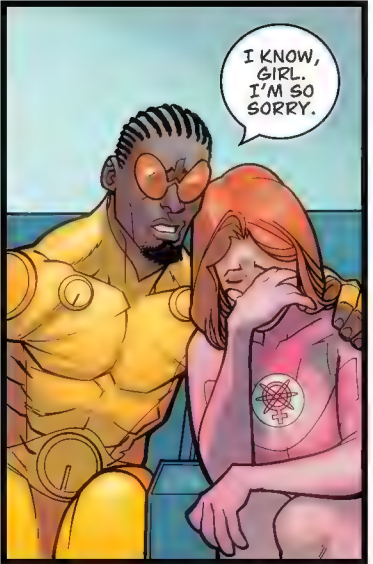
I'LL  
EXPLAIN  
ON THE  
WAY.



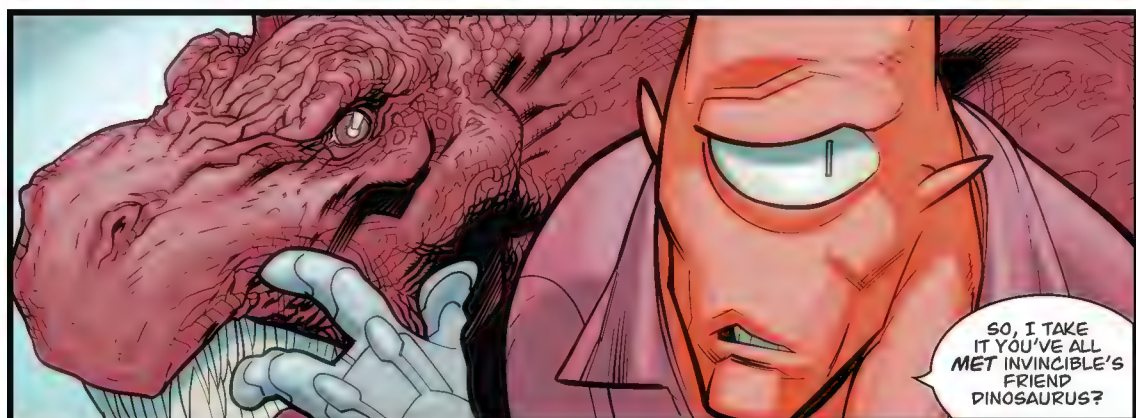












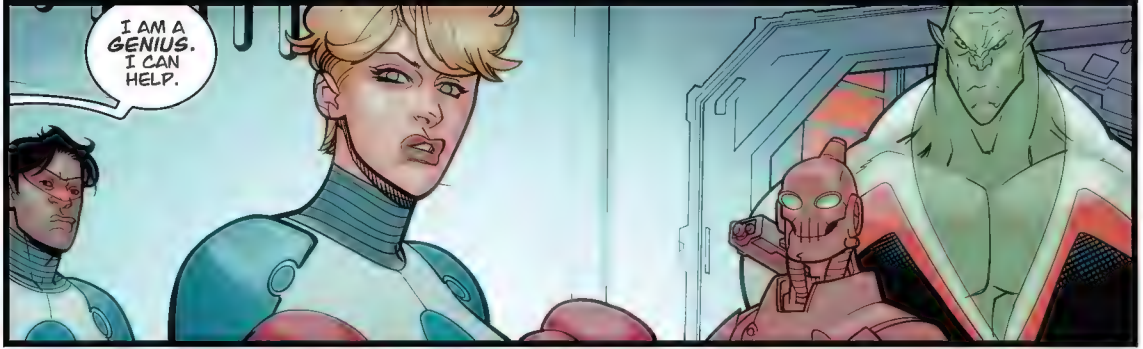




IT APPEARS YOU INTEND TO ATTACK ME. I AM TOLD THAT MY ALLY INVINCIBLE IS DEATHLY ILL.

IS HE NOT YOUR FRIEND? ARE YOU NOT CONCERNED FOR HIS WELLBEING?

I DO NOT KNOW THE STRENGTH AND STABILITY OF THIS VESSEL, BUT I AM CERTAIN A FIGHT BETWEEN US WOULD DO CONSIDERABLE DAMAGE, POSSIBLY REACHING INVINCIBLE, FURTHERING HIS INJURY OR AT THE VERY LEAST INTERFERING WITH THE EFFORTS TO CURE HIM. FURTHERMORE...



I AM A GENIUS. I CAN HELP.



THAT WILL NOT BE NECESSARY.

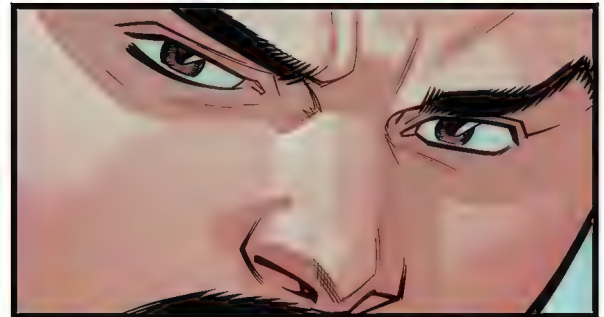
YOUR SERVICES WILL NOT BE NEEDED.

WHO ARE--

NO MATTER--FROM WHAT I KNOW OF YOUR PEOPLE AND YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO EARTH, THE ONLY POSSIBLE REASON YOU WOULD EVEN ATTEMPT TO CURE INVINCIBLE WOULD BE TO GAIN FAVOR WITH THE PEOPLE OF EARTH.

LOGICALLY YOU WOULD NOT ATTEMPT TO GAIN THAT FAVOR IF YOU DIDN'T DEEM IT TO BE ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL.

I AM OFFERING MY ASSISTANCE BECAUSE INVINCIBLE IS USEFUL TO ME. CAN YOU REALLY AFFORD TO TURN AWAY SOMEONE WHO IS MORE THAN LIKELY ABLE TO HELP?

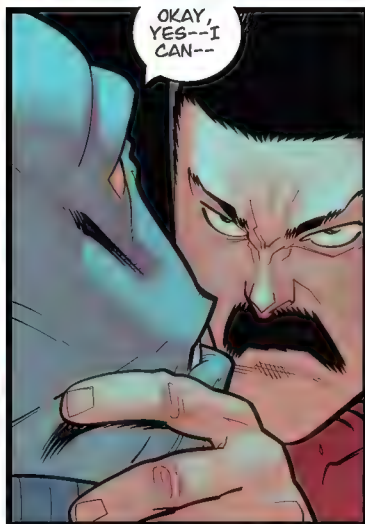


CLEAR ONE OF THE LABS FOR THIS... CREATURE.





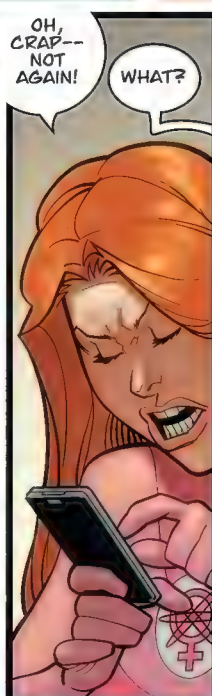
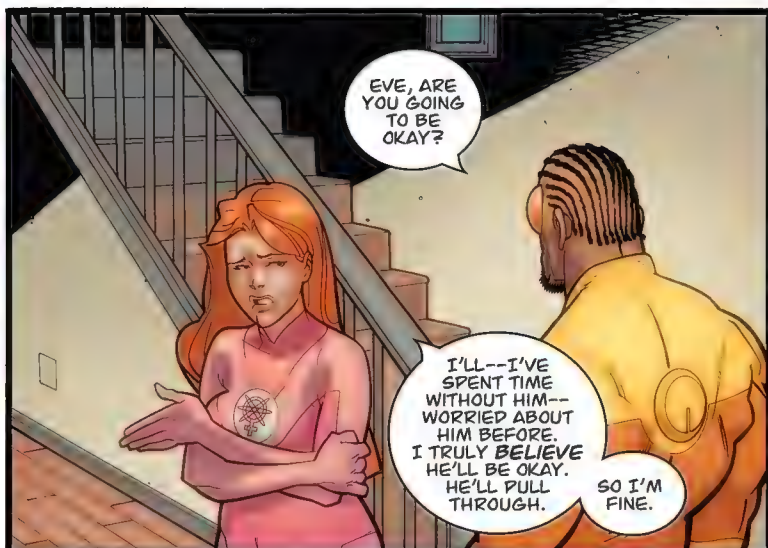
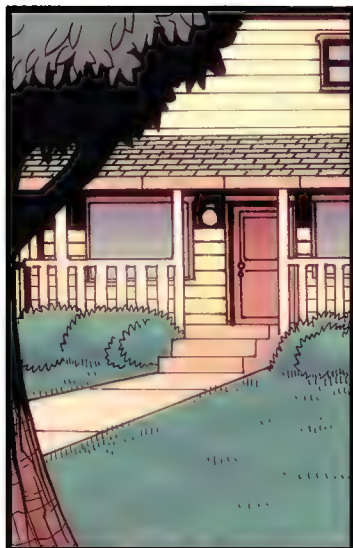




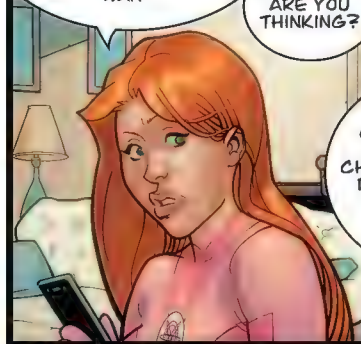






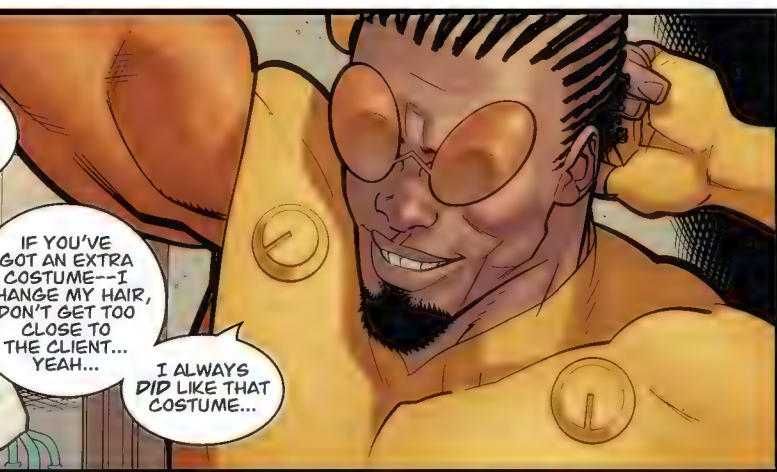


IT WAS JUST A MATTER OF TIME. WITH INVINCIBLE OFF HELPING DINOSAURUS, PEOPLE WERE BOUND TO FIND OUT WHAT WAS GOING ON EVENTUALLY. WAIT--



IF YOU'VE GOT AN EXTRA COSTUME--I CHANGE MY HAIR, DON'T GET TOO CLOSE TO THE CLIENT... YEAH...

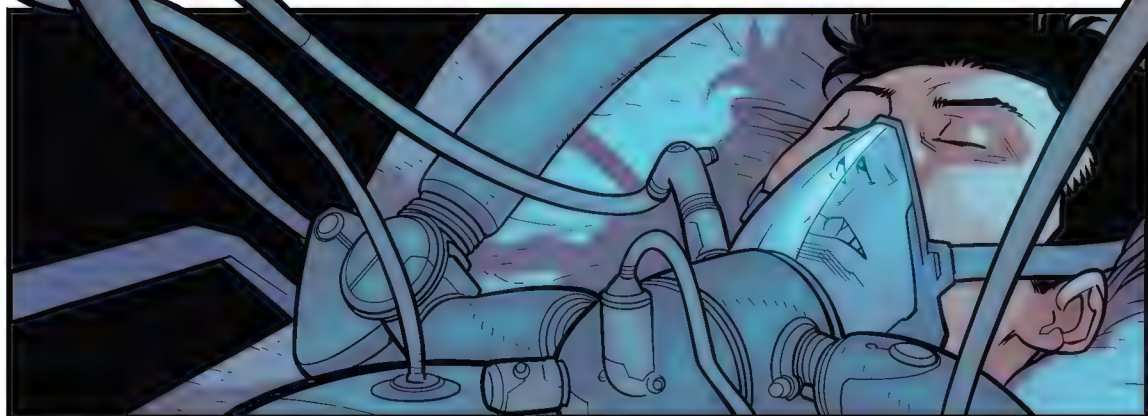
I ALWAYS DID LIKE THAT COSTUME...

















# CHAPTER 90













THE LAST REMAINING  
VILTRUMITE WARSHIP,  
STATIONED ON THE MOON.



EXCUSE  
ME.



HOW HAVE  
YOU GAINED  
ACCESS TO  
MY--?!



CALM YOURSELF. I  
TRUST YOU FAR LESS  
THAN YOU TRUST ME.  
I'VE TAPPED INTO  
YOUR SYSTEM, I KNOW  
THE LAYOUT WELL  
ENOUGH TO FIND YOUR  
QUARTERS... AND  
ESCAPE IF I  
NEED TO.

I'VE MADE SOME ADVANCES,  
BUT THERE ARE SOME NOTES  
I'M CURRENTLY UNABLE TO  
DECIPHER. COULD YOU ALLOW  
ME ACCESS TO THE SCIENTIST  
WHOSE WORK I'M STUDYING?  
I HAVE SOME  
QUESTIONS.

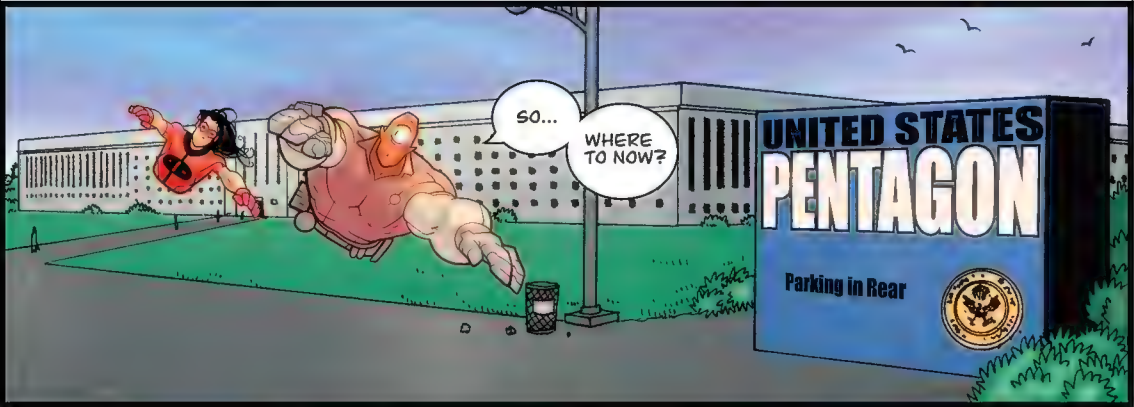


NO, I  
CANNOT.  
HE'S...

...UNAVAILABLE.











WE WERE READY TO KILL EVERY MAN, WOMAN AND CHILD ON THIS PLANET-- AND IF THRAGG HADN'T REVEALED HIMSELF WHEN HE DID... WE WOULD HAVE DONE IT--AND IT WOULDN'T HAVE WORKED.

WE WOULDN'T HAVE ACCOMPLISHED A THING... THE VILTRUMITES WOULD STILL BE OUT THERE.

YOU DON'T KNOW THAT. THE VIRUS COULD HAVE KILLED THEM ALL.

HOW CAN YOU CARE FOR THESE PEOPLE LESS THAN I DO? I'VE SPENT NO TIME HERE.



I WAS BROUGHT HERE WHEN I WAS VERY YOUNG--BUT I HAVE FULL RECOLLECTION OF EVERY MOMENT OF MY LIFE.

MY PEOPLE, THE THRAXANS, DO NOT FORM SIMILAR ATTACHMENTS AS THE PEOPLE OF EARTH. THRAXAN LIFESPANS ARE VERY SHORT, DEATH IS A PART OF LIFE... NOT A HORRIBLE OCCURRENCE.

I HAVE GROWN ATTACHED TO MY FAMILY AND SOME PEOPLE I'VE KNOWN... BUT TO ME... LIFE IS NOT SUCH A SPECIAL THING.



INTERESTING... ODD, MAYBE UNSETTLING BUT... INTERESTING.

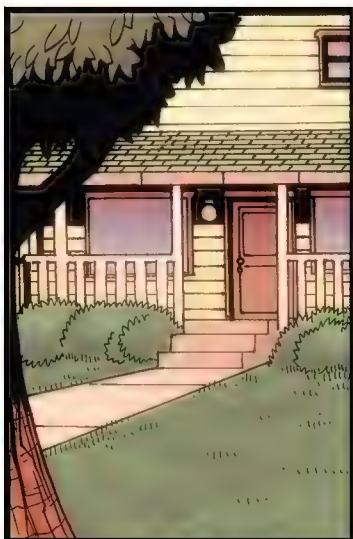
DO YOU WANT TO GO VISIT TECH JACKET?



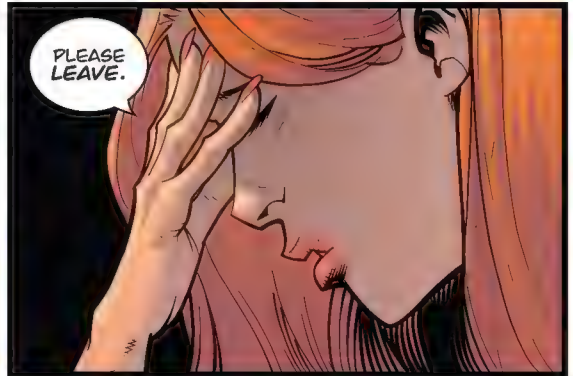
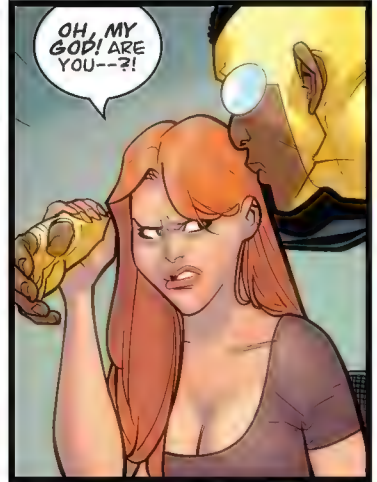
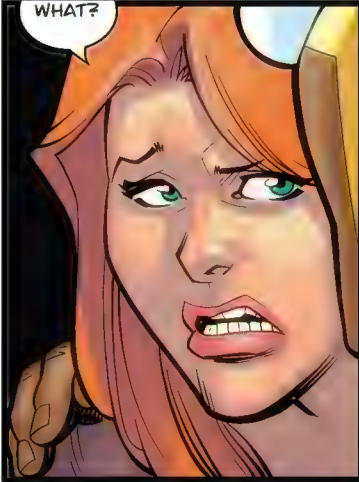
SURE.















I'M TOLD THAT THE PERIOD OF TIME WHERE YOU CAN PASS ON THE SCOURGE VIRUS TO OTHERS... HAS PASSED.

ALL THIS TIME WE'VE BEEN STUDYING YOU, THE VIRUS, YOUR DNA... ALL THIS HARD WORK HAS PROVEN UNNECESSARY. YOU'RE GOING TO SURVIVE.

IT IS RARE FOR ONE AS YOUNG AS YOU TO BE ABLE TO FEND OFF THE SCOURGE VIRUS NATURALLY... THIS IS SOMETHING THAT HAS STUMPED MY SCIENTISTS...

...BUT I KNOW WHY.

OF COURSE YOU WILL SURVIVE THIS VIRUS... FAILING TO DO SO WOULD BETRAY YOUR BLOODLINE.

FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS I HAVE ACTED AS GRAND REGENT... CHARGED WITH THE TASK OF LOCATING THE LOST SON OF ARGALL, PLACING HIM ON THE THRONE OF VILTRUM...

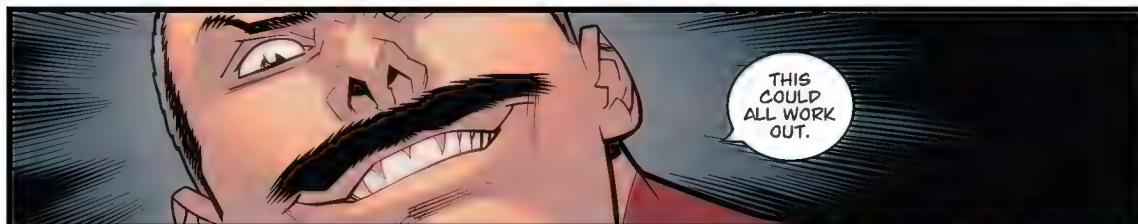
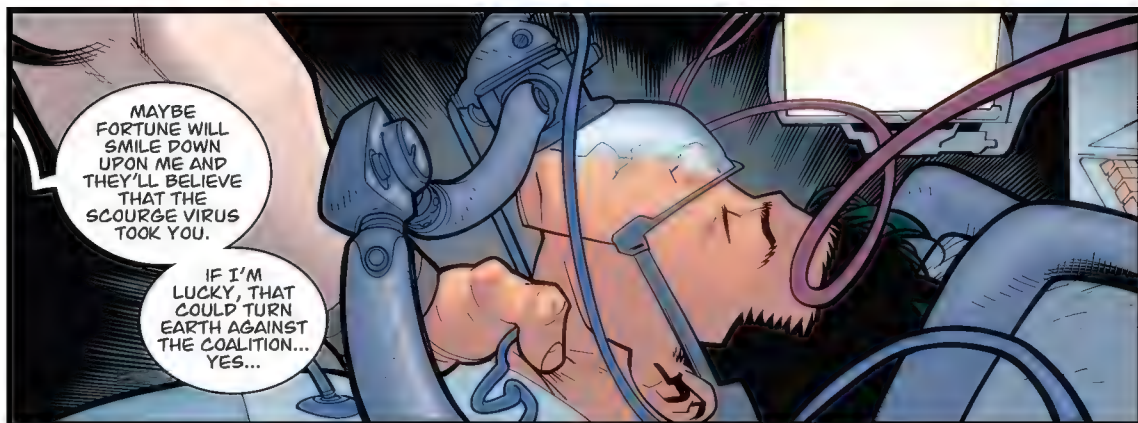
YOUR FATHER... YOU... NO.

I WILL NOT YIELD MY POSITION TO TRAITORS.



IF I HAVE TO FORFEIT OUR TIME HERE ON EARTH... SO BE IT.











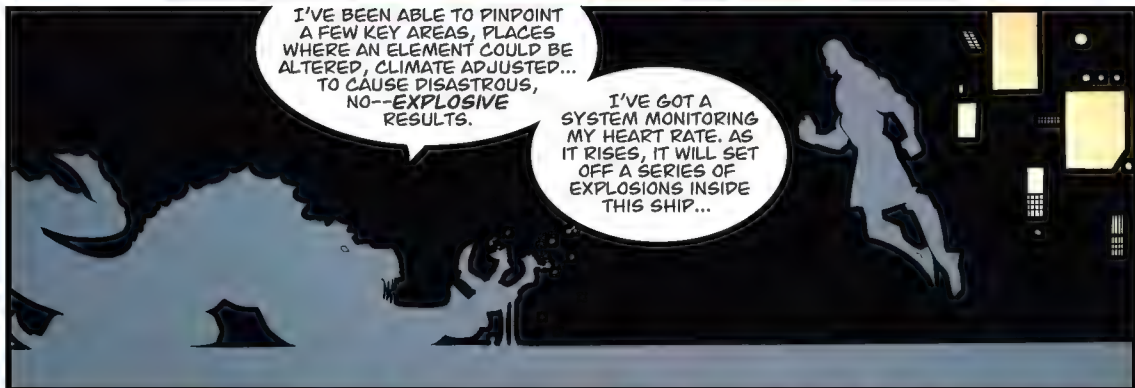
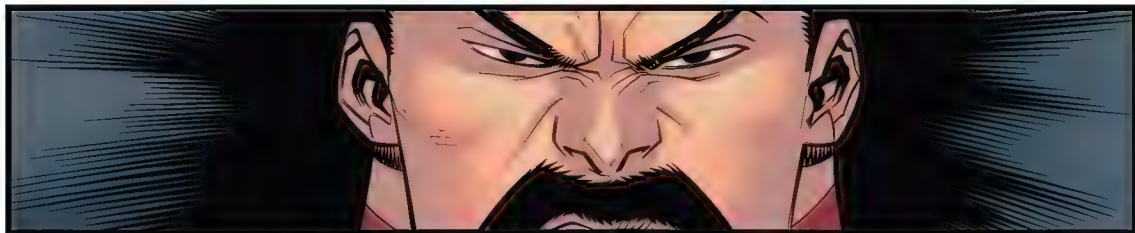


YOUR HOME PLANET, VILTRUM, WAS DESTROYED. ALL THAT HISTORY LOST FOREVER. I WOULD IMAGINE THAT THERE MUST BE A GREAT MANY ITEMS OF TREMENDOUS VALUE ABOARD THIS SHIP...

...THE LAST VESSEL OF THE VILTRUM EMPIRE.

IT WAS UNWISE TO GIVE ME COMPLETE ACCESS TO YOUR FILES. I'VE LEARNED A LOT OVER THE LAST FEW HOURS.

ENOUGH TO KNOW YOU DON'T WANT ANYTHING BAD TO HAPPEN TO THIS SHIP.



I'VE BEEN ABLE TO PINPOINT A FEW KEY AREAS, PLACES WHERE AN ELEMENT COULD BE ALTERED, CLIMATE ADJUSTED... TO CAUSE DISASTROUS, NO--EXPLOSIVE RESULTS.

I'VE GOT A SYSTEM MONITORING MY HEART RATE. AS IT RISES, IT WILL SET OFF A SERIES OF EXPLOSIONS INSIDE THIS SHIP...



YOU EXPECT ME TO BELIEVE--



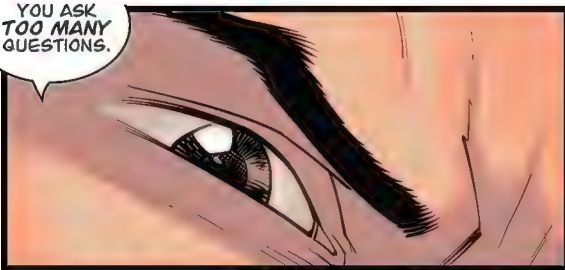
NOT AT ALL. IF MY CALCULATIONS ARE CORRECT, ONE SHOULD BE GOING OFF RIGHT... ABOUT...



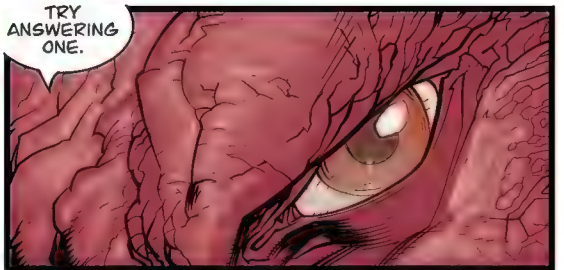


NOW THAT I HAVE YOUR ATTENTION... WHY KILL INVINCIBLE? YOU WERE FIGHTING TO SAVE HIS LIFE LESS THAN AN HOUR AGO-- SO DESPERATE TO SAVE HIM YOU ALLOWED ME ACCESS TO ALL YOUR RESOURCES. WHAT CHANGED?

WHAT DID YOU DISCOVER THAT CAUSED YOU TO RECONSIDER?



YOU ASK TOO MANY QUESTIONS.



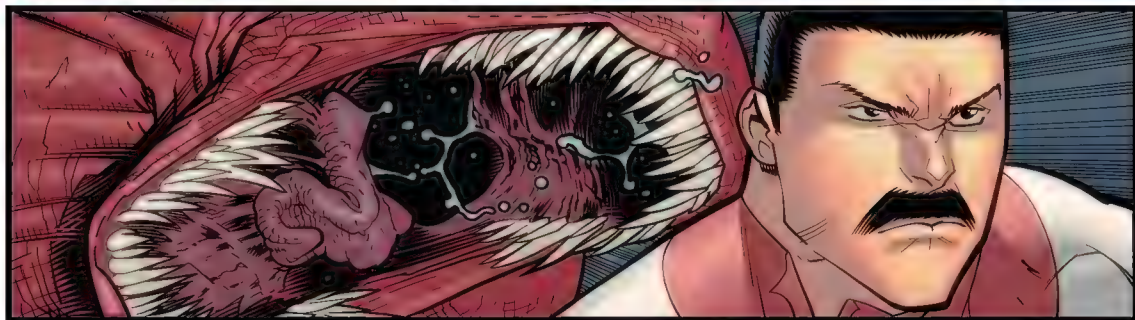
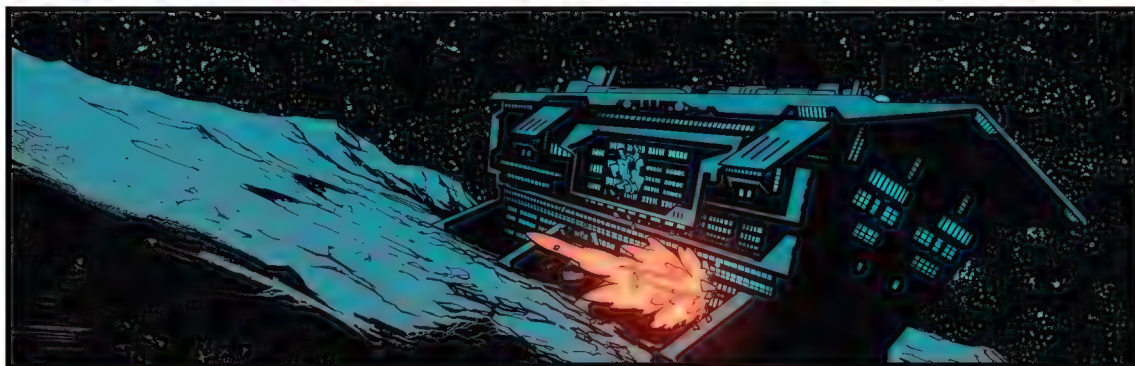
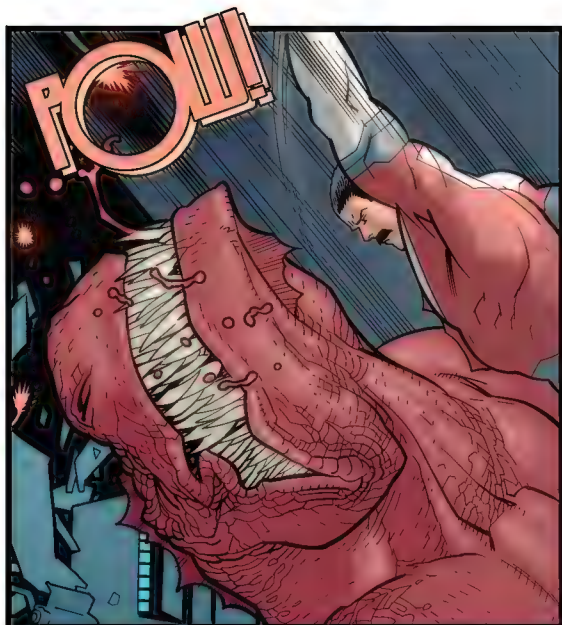
TRY ANSWERING ONE.



I'D RATHER DISCOVER IF YOU INSTALLED A FAILSAFE IF YOUR HEART STOPS.

YOU DON'T WANT--!

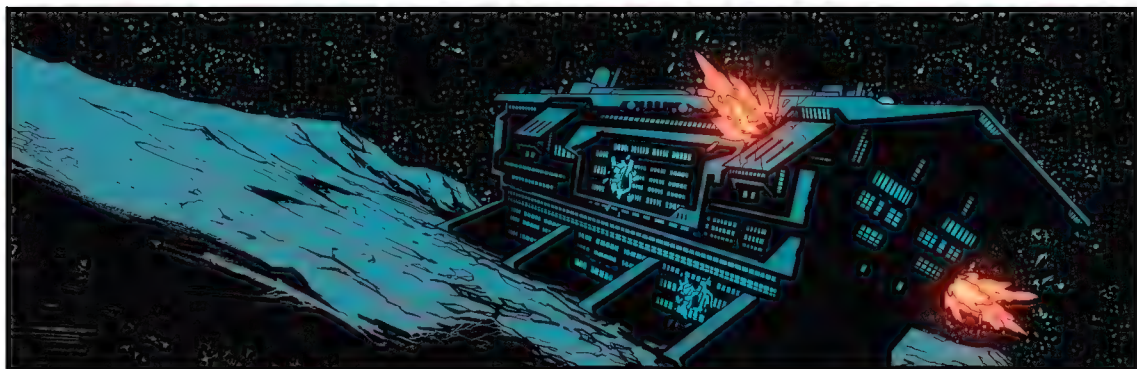






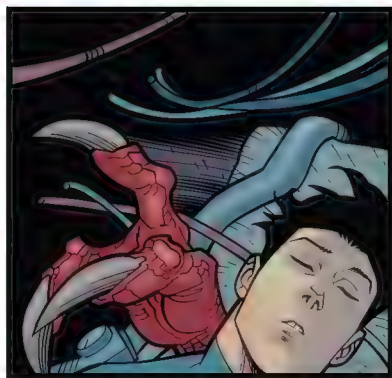






WHILE YOU'RE BUSY BLEEDING, I WILL ATTEND TO THIS. I SEE NOW THAT STOPPING YOUR HEART WOULD ONLY CAUSE MORE DAMAGE.

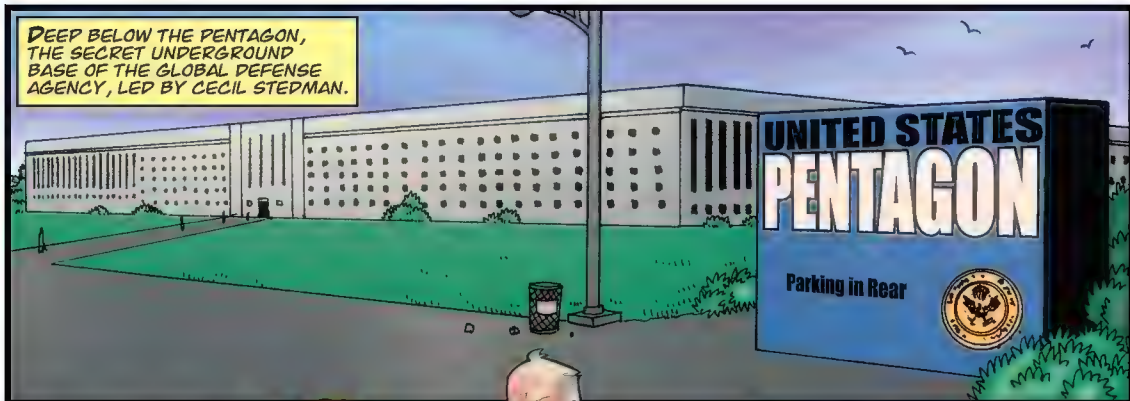
COLLECT YOURSELF. I'LL RETURN SHORTLY, YOU'LL WISH YOU WERE DEAD SOON ENOUGH.











DEEP BELOW THE PENTAGON,  
THE SECRET UNDERGROUND  
BASE OF THE GLOBAL DEFENSE  
AGENCY, LED BY CECIL STEPMAN.

I DON'T UNDERSTAND.  
I HEARD THRAGG SAY  
WE COULD VISIT ANY  
TIME. I KNOW IT'S  
BARELY BEEN A DAY,  
BUT I'D LIKE TO SEE  
HIM... I'M SURE YOU  
UNDERSTAND.

I DO, BUT IT'S NOT  
AS SIMPLE AS MAKING  
A PHONE CALL. WE'VE  
ATTEMPTED TO  
CONTACT THEM AND  
WE CAN'T SEEM TO  
GET THROUGH.

THEIR  
COMMUNICATION  
IS DOWN.

ANOTHER  
CAUSE FOR  
CONCERN, THE  
GUARDIANS OF THE  
GLOBE MOON BASE  
IS REPORTING UNUSUAL  
SEISMIC ACTIVITY ON  
THE MOON THAT IS  
ORIGINATING IN THE  
REGION OF THE  
VILTRUMITE  
SHIP.

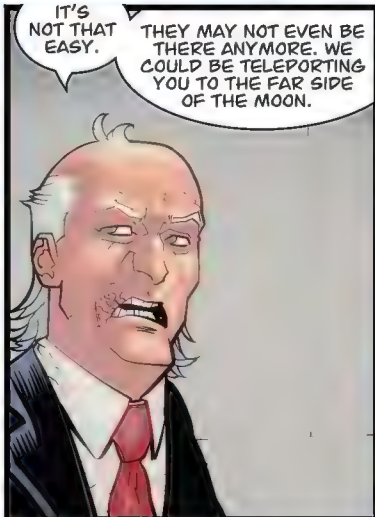


SEND  
ME UP  
NOW!



IT'S  
NOT THAT  
EASY.

THEY MAY NOT EVEN BE  
THERE ANYMORE. WE  
COULD BE TELEPORTING  
YOU TO THE FAR SIDE  
OF THE MOON.

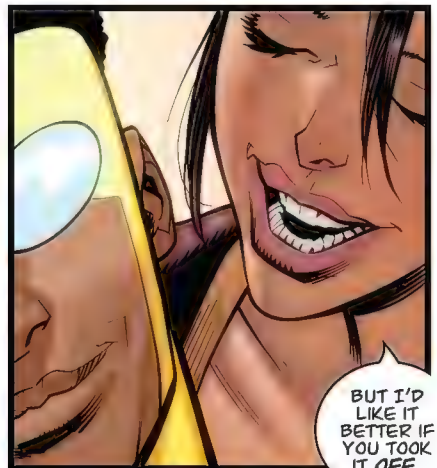
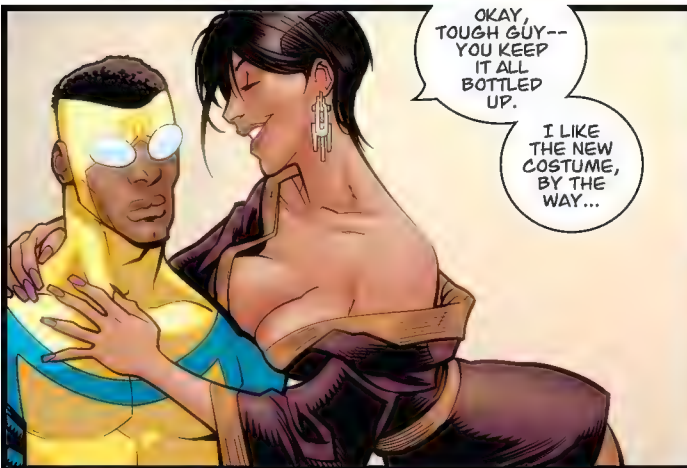


SEND ME UP TO THE  
GUARDIANS' MOON  
BASE---I'LL FLY OVER  
FROM THERE.



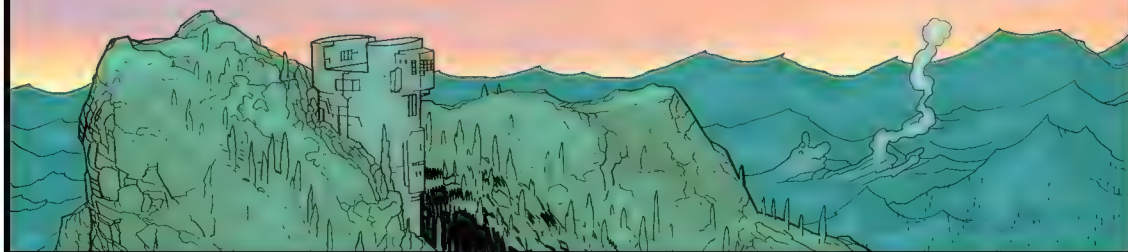
I NEED TO  
KNOW WHAT'S  
HAPPENING---  
NOW!







UNDISCLOSED LOCATION, THE  
SECRET BASE OF DINOSAURUS.













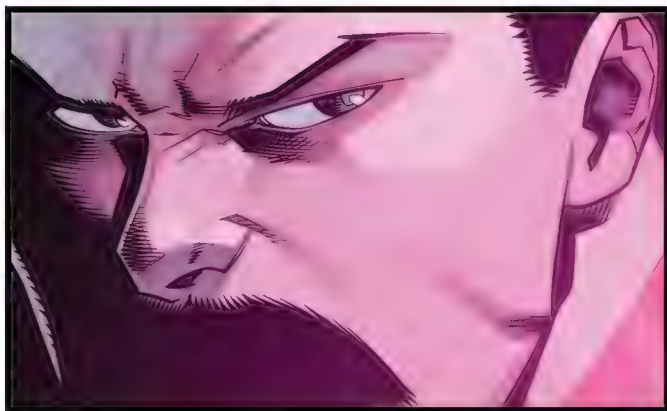
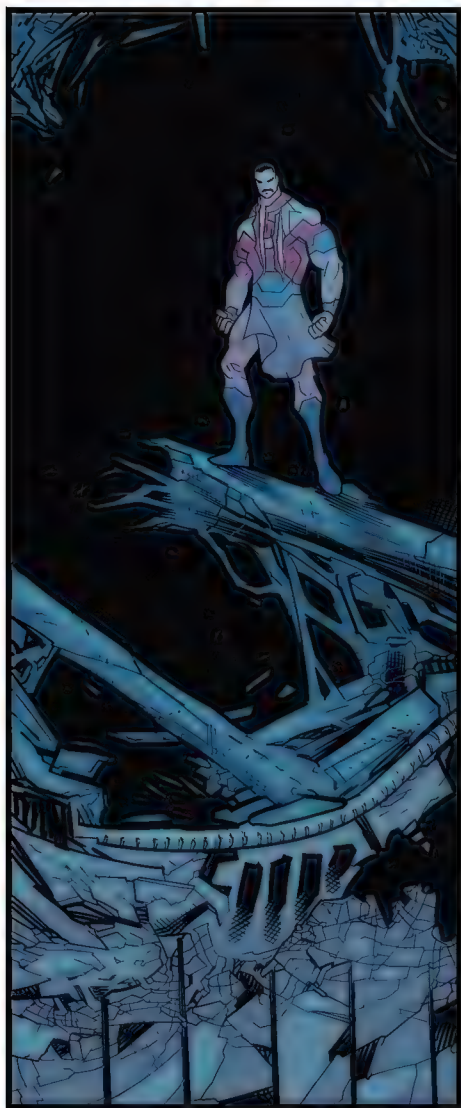
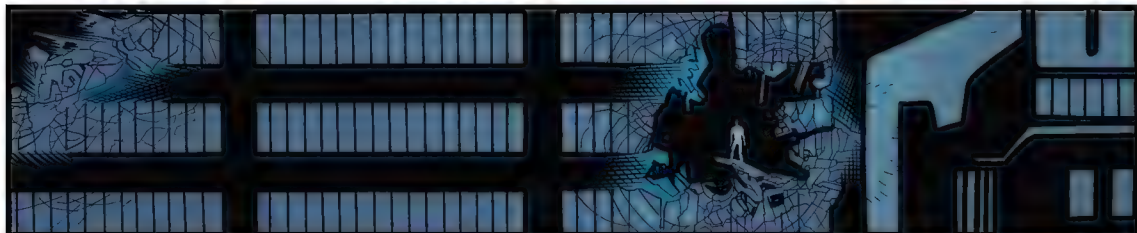
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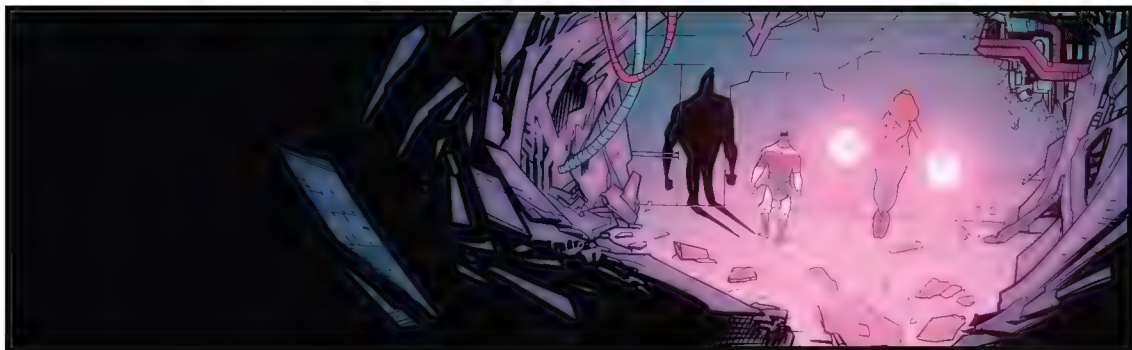


LAST REMAINING VILTRUMITE WARSHIP,  
CURRENTLY LOCATED ON THE MOON.

THE ONE ORBITING EARTH.











WHAT  
HAPPENED?  
WHERE IS  
MARK?

IS HE  
OKAY?

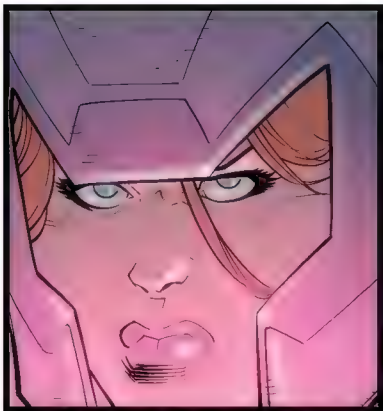
HE IS NO  
LONGER  
HERE.



WHAT  
DOES THAT  
MEAN?



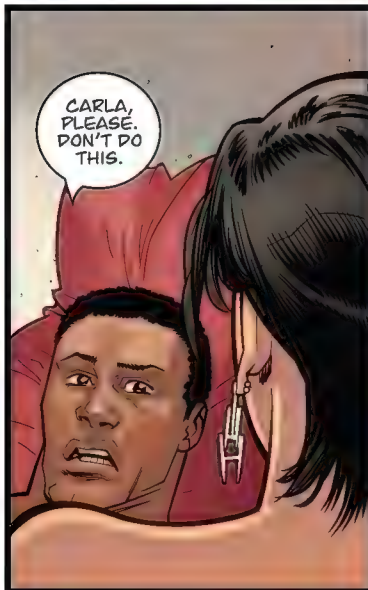
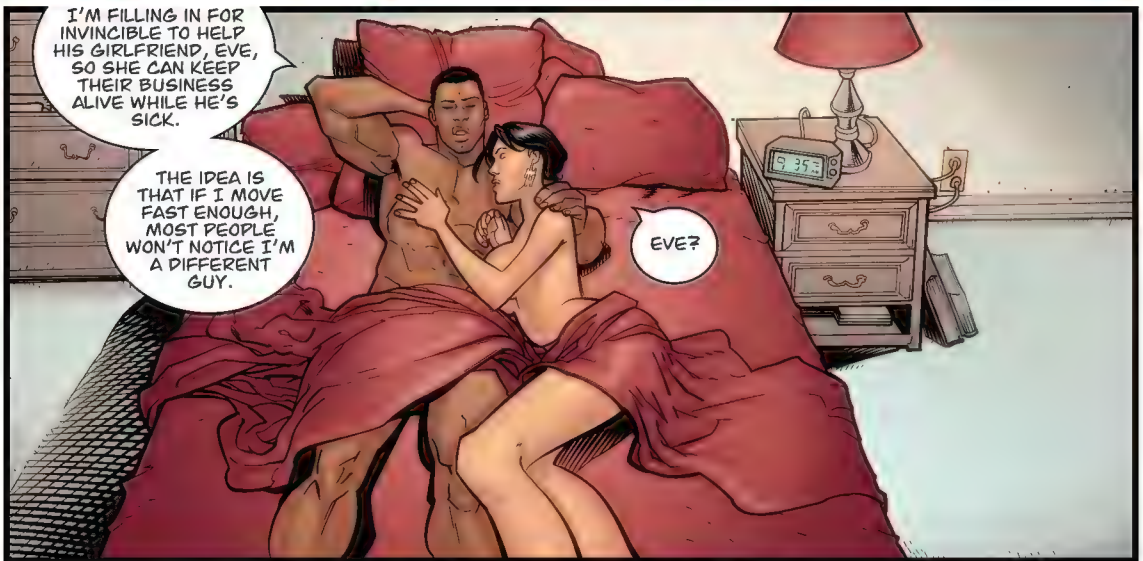
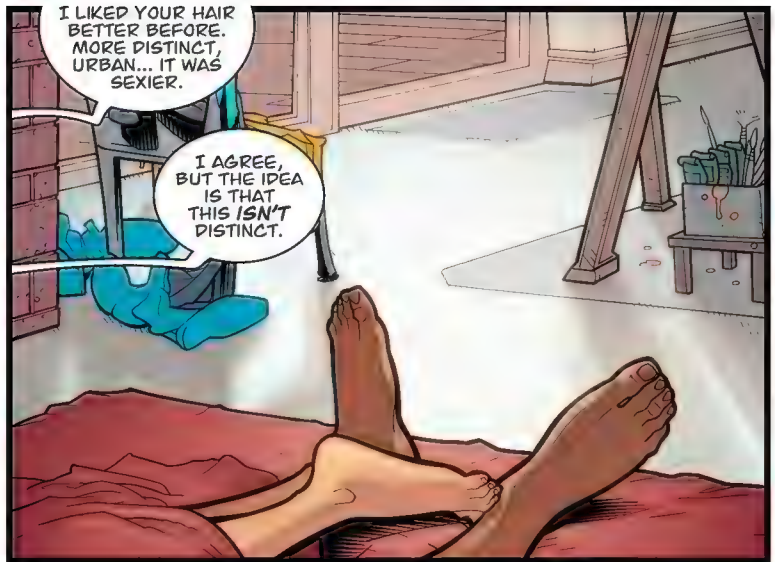
HA! HA! HA!  
HA! HA!



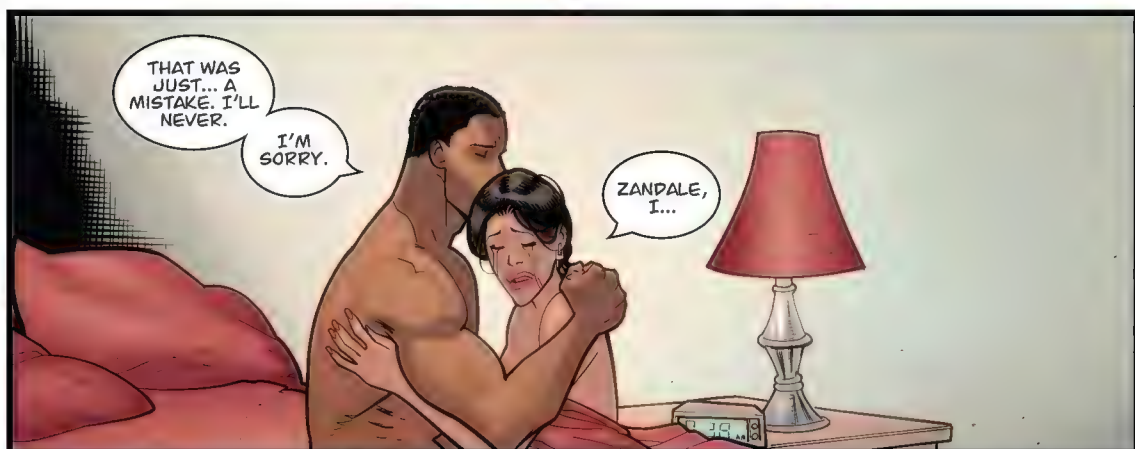
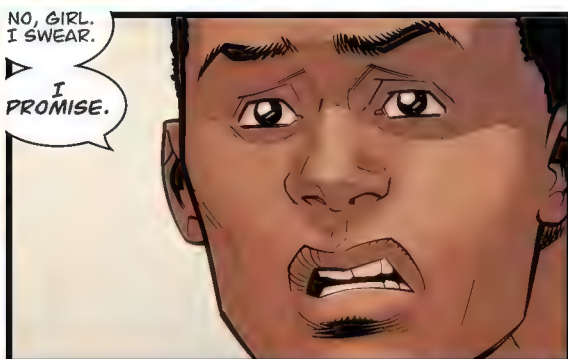
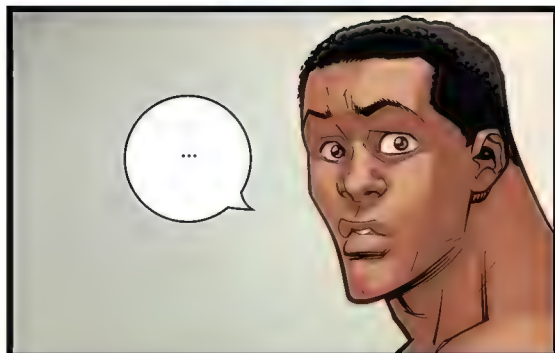
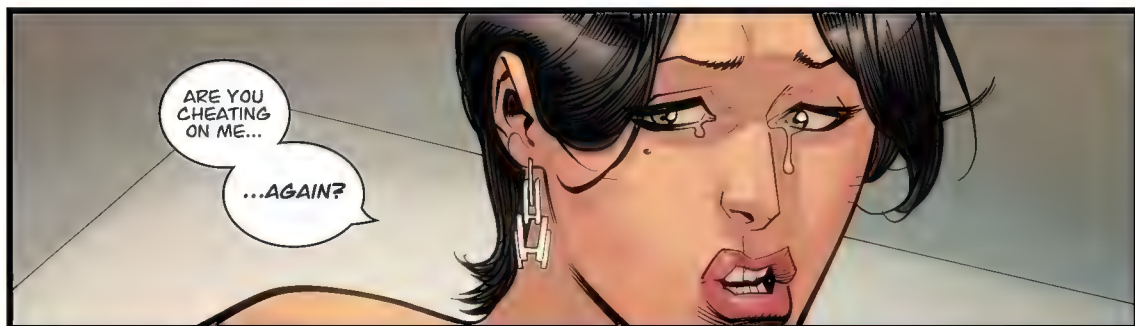
CALM DOWN BEFORE  
YOU FIND YOURSELF  
IMPALED ON A  
CLENCHED FIST...  
AGAIN.

WE WERE  
ATTACKED, HE  
WAS TAKEN.  
DIRECT YOUR ANGER  
TO YOUR MATE'S  
MONSTROUS  
COLLEAGUE THAT  
OFFERED TO  
HELP HIM.



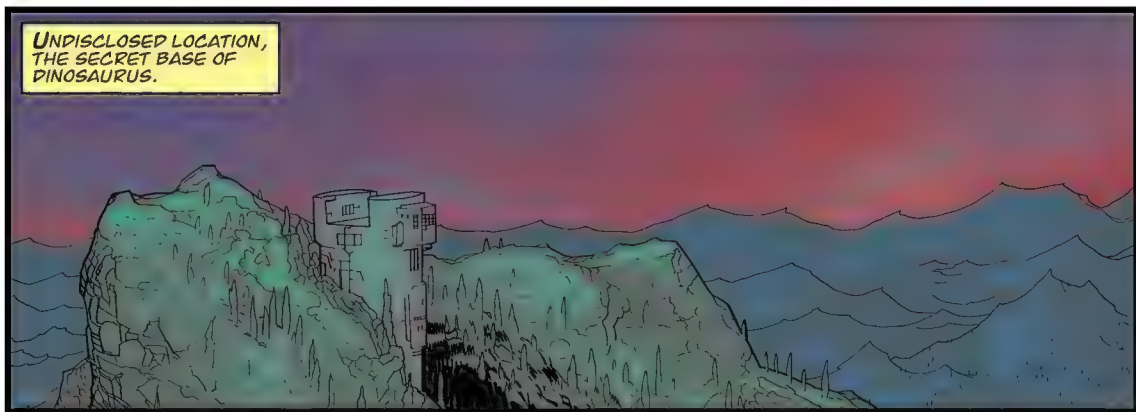








UNDISCLOSED LOCATION,  
THE SECRET BASE OF  
DINOSAURUS.



LIKE... WHAT  
HAPPENED?



I DON'T  
KNOW, I THOUGHT  
YOU DIED... I  
WOKE UP IN A PILE OF  
WRECKAGE, YOU WERE  
IN YOUR DINOSAURUS  
FORM--BUT YOU WERE  
ALL BEATEN UP...  
REALLY BAD.

YOU  
GRUNTED AT  
ME, I COULDN'T  
MAKE ANYTHING  
OUT--THEN YOU  
PASSED OUT, AND  
TURNED.

I HAVE  
NO IDEA WHY  
WE'RE HERE,  
OR WHAT  
HAPPENED.

AM I DOING  
BAD STUFF  
AGAIN? DID  
YOU STOP  
ME?



NO, YOU  
WEREN'T DOING  
ANYTHING BAD.  
I THINK THAT'S  
BEHIND YOU... I'M  
HELPING YOU  
ACCOMPLISH  
GOOD  
THINGS.

A LOT  
OF GOOD  
THINGS... AT  
LEAST I WAS,  
UNTIL I GOT  
SICK.

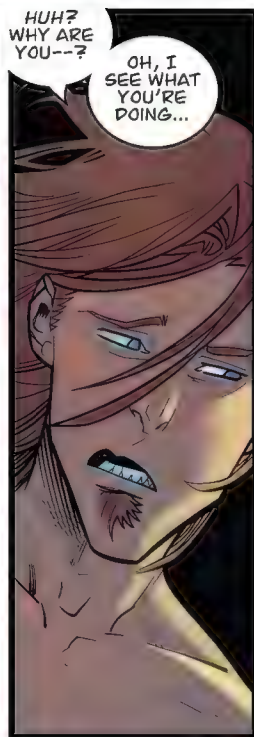
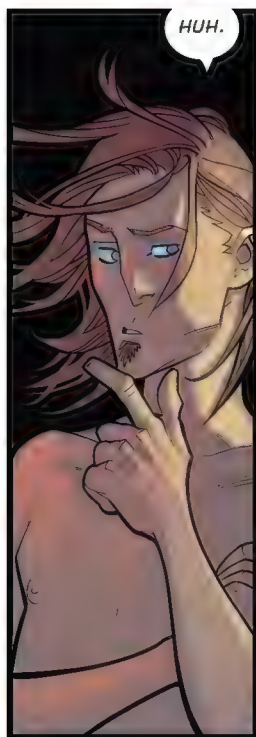
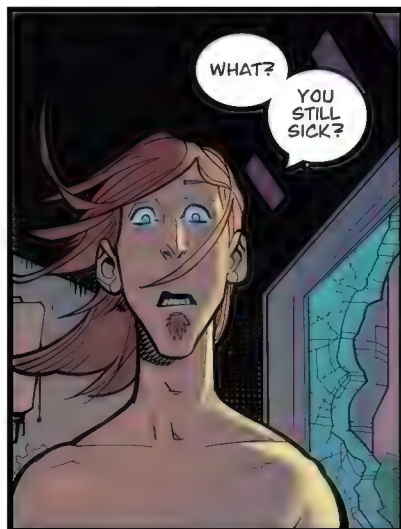
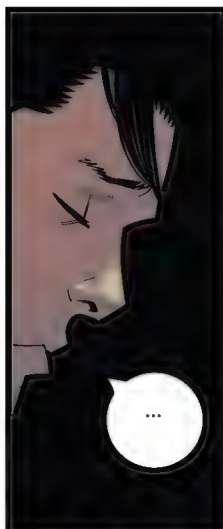


DID I MAKE  
YOU SICK?  
MAYBE I  
TRICKED YOU,  
BRO.



WHEN I'M  
THE MONSTER,  
I'M PURE EVIL--  
THAT'S WHY I  
LOOK LIKE THAT.  
YOU GOTTA  
WATCH OUT,  
MAN.









WHEN WE  
CAME OVER  
TO HANG OUT,  
TECH JACKET--  
THIS TOTALLY  
WAS NOT  
PART OF THE  
PLAN!

SORRY,  
MAN--WHEN  
DUTY CALLS,  
DUTY CALLS!  
THANKS FOR  
COMING ALONG  
WHEN I GOT  
THE ALERT!



YOU THINK YOUR DAD  
WILL STILL BE UP FOR  
WATCHING FISTFUL OF  
DOLLARS WHEN WE'RE  
DONE? I'VE NEVER  
SEEN AN EARTH  
MOVIE.

HE'S  
ALWAYS UP  
FOR WATCHING  
FISTFUL OF  
DOLLARS!

RAD!





ANY CLUE HOW TO BEAT THIS THING? I CAN'T TELL WHAT PARTS ARE HIM AND WHAT PARTS ARE HIS SUIT!

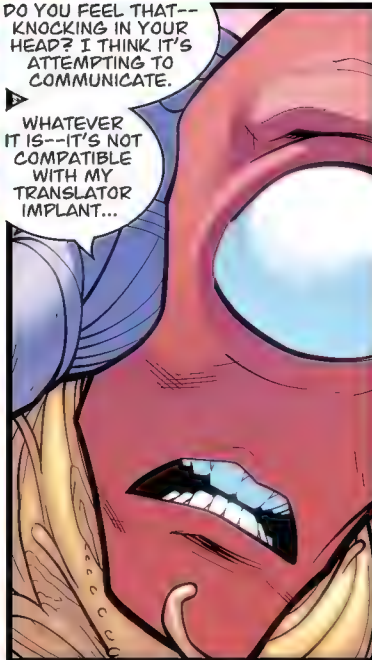
THIS IS A SUIT, RIGHT?!



I'VE NEVER FOUGHT ANYTHING LIKE THIS GUY BEFORE-- BUT IT APPEARS TO BE SOME KIND OF SYMBIOTIC ORGANISM.

WZAP!  
WZAP!

I CAN'T REALLY TELL WHO'S IN CONTROL.



DO YOU FEEL THAT-- KNOCKING IN YOUR HEAD? I THINK IT'S ATTEMPTING TO COMMUNICATE.

▶ WHATEVER IT IS--IT'S NOT COMPATIBLE WITH MY TRANSLATOR IMPLANT...



CRAP! THIS THING IS MELTING MY TECH JACKET-- IT'S GETTING INSIDE!

HIT IT!  
HIT IT!

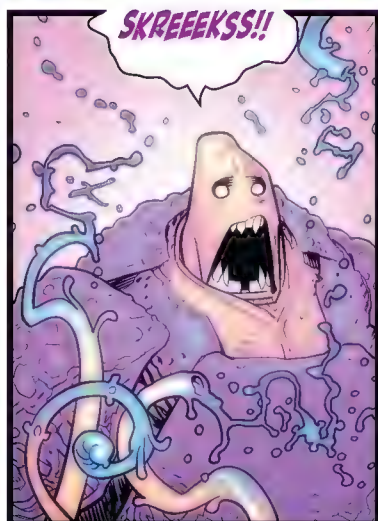
HIT IT!



I AM!

KRAKK









NO SWEAT. I'M HAPPY TO  
HELP OUT--DOESN'T SEEM  
LIKE IT'S GOING TO BE  
ABLE TO BREAK FREE OF  
MY CONSTRUCT.

I DIDN'T  
COME HERE  
TO HELP  
THOUGH--  
IT'S MARK--  
HE'S--



OH,  
GOD--  
IS  
HE--?!



HE'S ALIVE...  
HE'S GOT TO  
BE... BUT I  
DON'T KNOW  
WHERE  
HE IS.

ALTHOUGH,  
YOU DO.



WHAT?!  
HE'S ON THE  
VILTRUMITE  
SHIP...

...ISN'T  
HE?



DINOSAURUS HAS  
HIM--AND I NEED  
YOUR HELP IF  
WE'RE GOING  
TO GET HIM  
BACK.

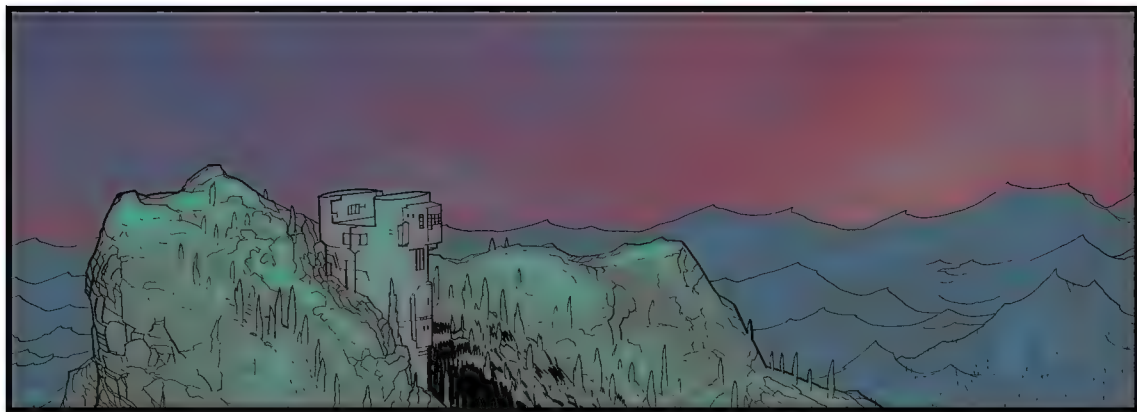
I CAN TAKE  
YOU TO THE PLACE  
MARK DIRECTED  
ME TO BEFORE...  
DINOSAURUS  
PROBABLY TOOK  
HIM THERE,  
RIGHT?

RIGHT,  
WE'LL NEED  
TO DROP THIS  
GUY OFF AT  
STRONGHOLD  
PENITENTIARY FOR  
PROCESSING  
FIRST,  
THOUGH.



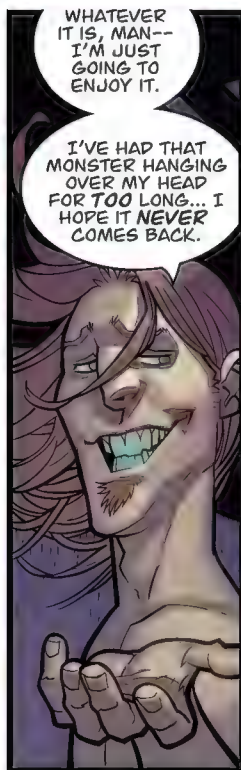






I DON'T UNDERSTAND, IT'S JUST NOT WORKING. MAYBE IF I WAS BEATEN UP AS BADLY AS YOU SAY... THAT PART OF ME IS, LIKE... DEAD AND STUFF.

THAT CAN'T BE IT... MAYBE YOU'RE HEALING, I DON'T KNOW HOW YOUR TRANSFORMATION WORKS... IT COULD JUST BE "OFF" RIGHT NOW.



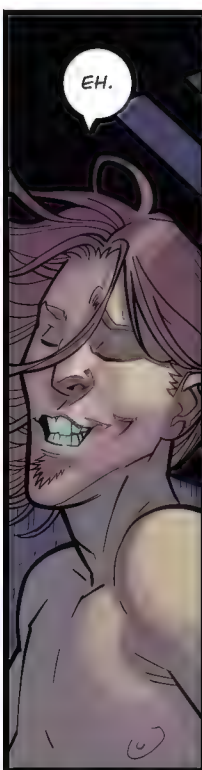
WHATEVER IT IS, MAN-- I'M JUST GOING TO ENJOY IT.

I'VE HAD THAT MONSTER HANGING OVER MY HEAD FOR TOO LONG... I HOPE IT NEVER COMES BACK.

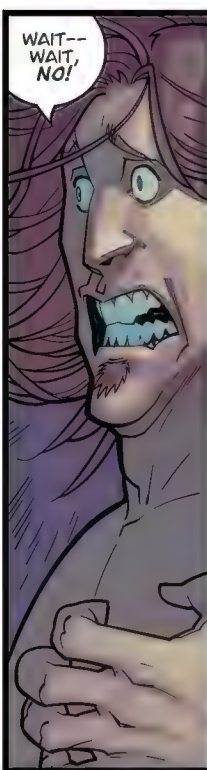


THAT WOULDN'T BE SO GREAT FOR ME. I DON'T KNOW WHY I'M HERE, OR WHY THIS BASE IS TRASHED.

FRANKLY, WHATEVER DID THIS COULD BE COMING BACK. OUR LIVES COULD BE IN DANGER.



EH.



WAIT-- WAIT, NO!



FINALLY.





YOU'RE  
LOOKING  
MUCH  
BETTER.

MY FORM  
IS BUILT ANEW  
EACH TIME I  
TRANSFORM--  
ARE THEY HERE?!  
HAVE THEY  
STRUCK?!

WHAT  
KIND  
OF TIME  
DO WE  
HAVE?!



I HAVE  
NO IDEA  
WHAT YOU'RE  
TALKING  
ABOUT!

THE  
VILTRUMITES--  
THEY TRIED TO KILL  
YOU! I ESCAPED,  
RETREATED HERE--  
BUT SURELY THEY  
FOLLOWED US! THEY  
COULD ATTACK AT  
ANY MOMENT!

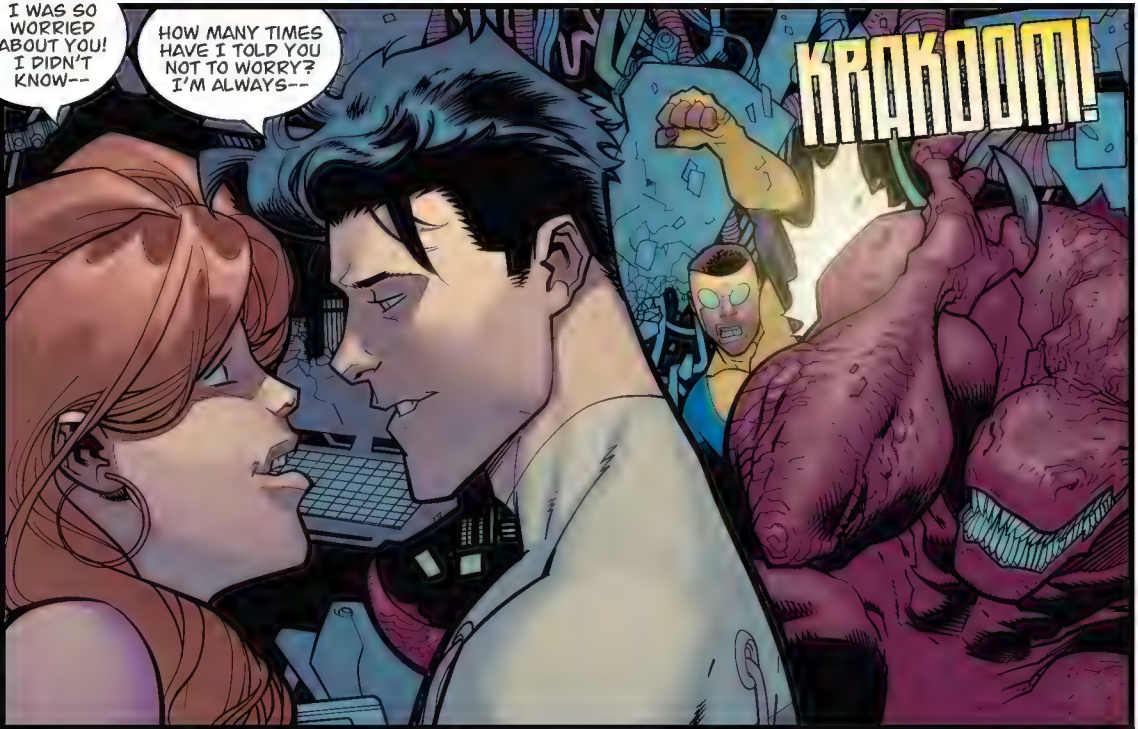
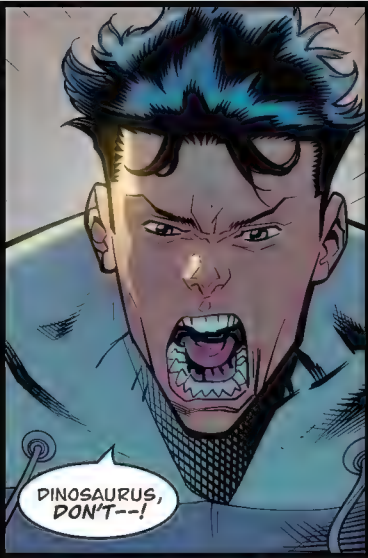
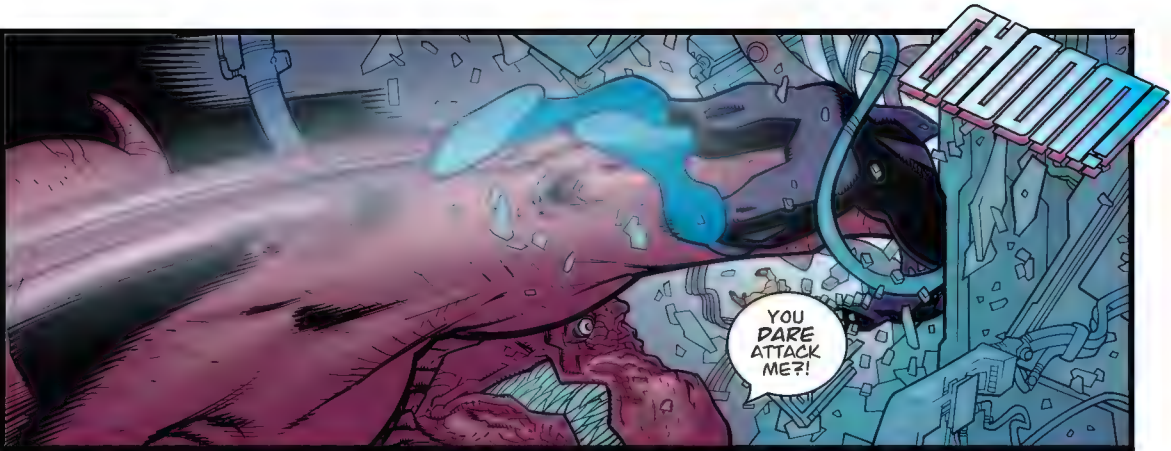




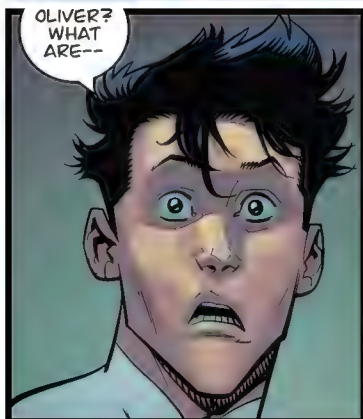








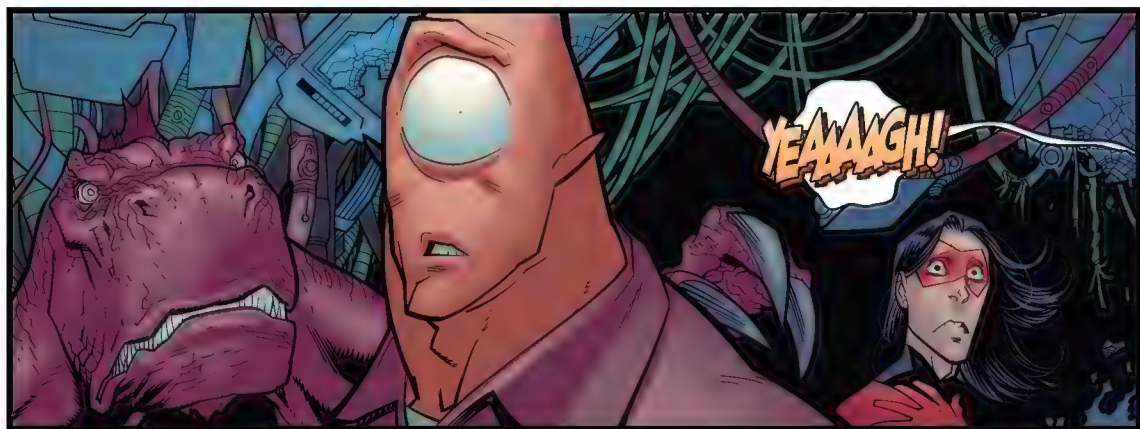


















# CHAPTER 92





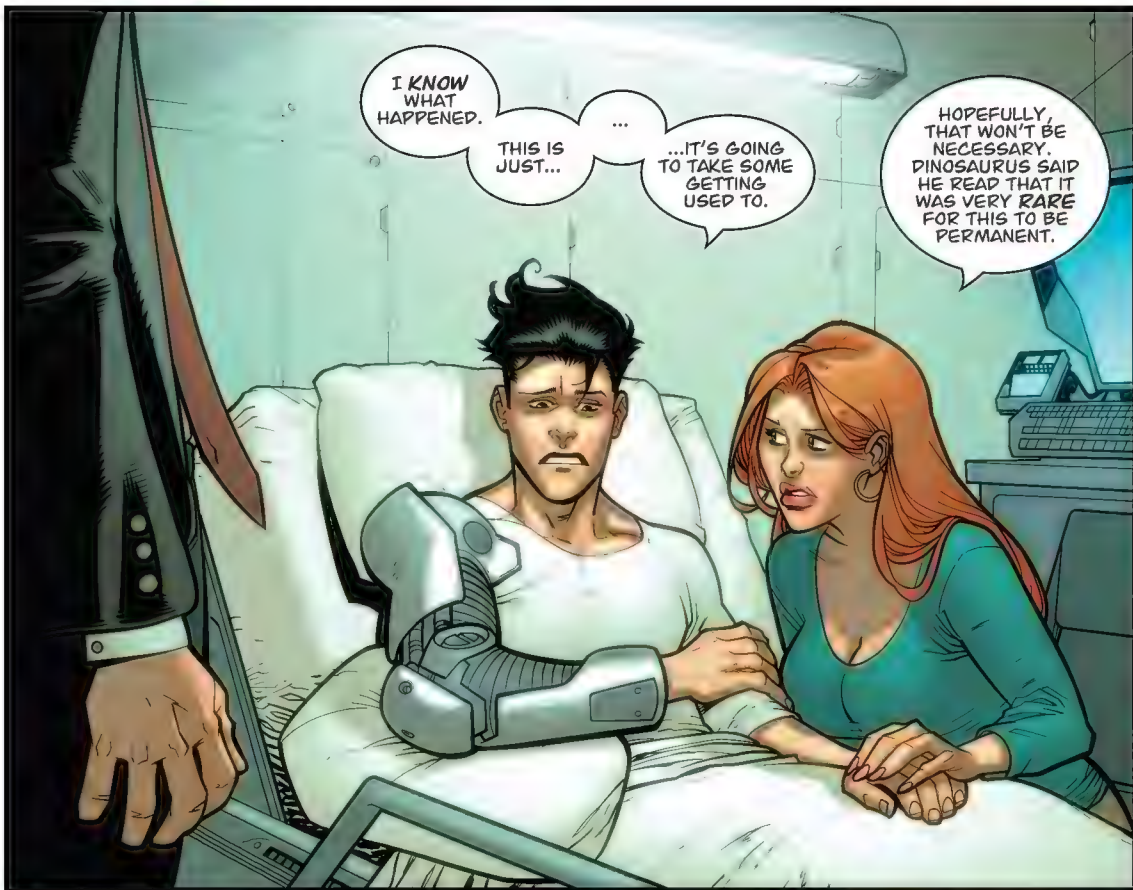


IT TOOK ELEVEN DIFFERENT SURGERIES TO RECONSTRUCT YOUR ARM SO THAT IT CAN HEAL PROPERLY.

THE SCOURGE VIRUS, AS IT'S BEEN EXPLAINED TO ME, SOMETIMES LEAVES SURVIVORS IN A PERIOD WHERE THEIR VILTRUMITE ABILITIES ARE SUSPENDED FOR A VARIABLE AMOUNT OF TIME--SOMETIMES PERMANENTLY.

THE PROBLEM IS THAT YOUR ABILITIES HAVEN'T LEFT YOU ALL AT ONCE... YOUR SUPER STRENGTH WAS STILL INTACT, YOUR INVULNERABILITY GREATLY DIMINISHED.

SO WHEN YOU HIT ALLEN--



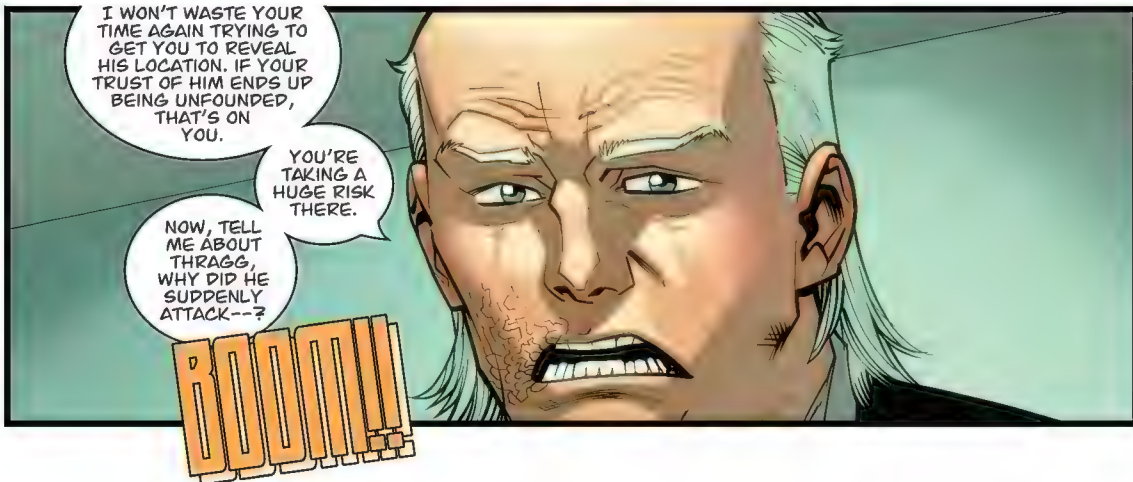
I KNOW WHAT HAPPENED.

THIS IS JUST...

...

...IT'S GOING TO TAKE SOME GETTING USED TO.

HOPEFULLY, THAT WON'T BE NECESSARY. DINOSAURUS SAID HE READ THAT IT WAS VERY RARE FOR THIS TO BE PERMANENT.



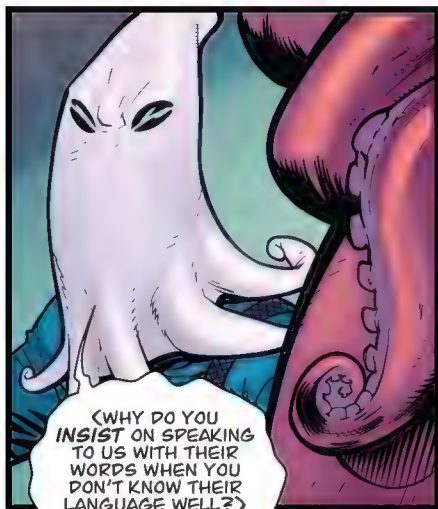
I WON'T WASTE YOUR TIME AGAIN TRYING TO GET YOU TO REVEAL HIS LOCATION. IF YOUR TRUST OF HIM ENDS UP BEING UNFOUNDED, THAT'S ON YOU.

YOU'RE TAKING A HUGE RISK THERE.

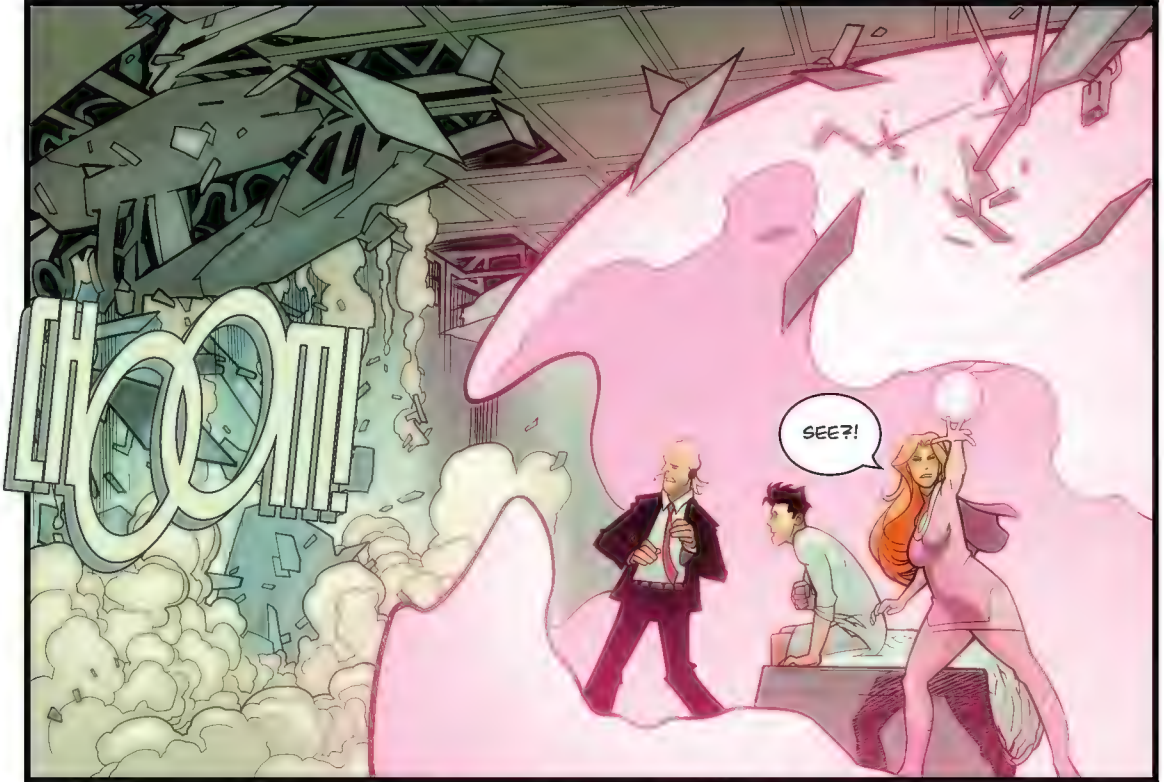
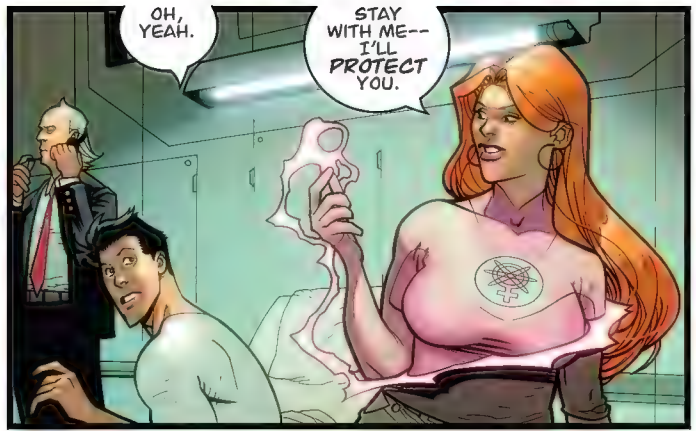
NOW, TELL ME ABOUT THRAGG, WHY DID HE SUDDENLY ATTACK--?

**BOOM!!**









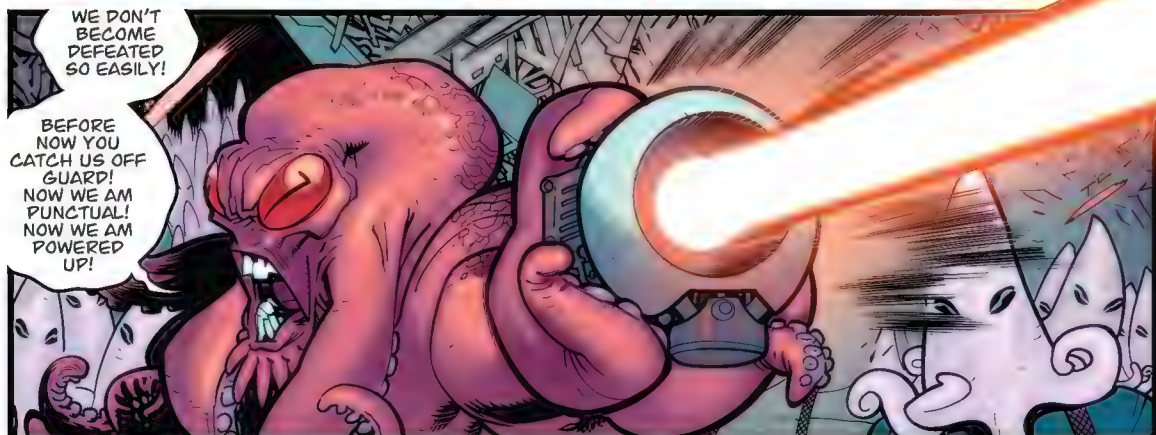




WE'VE DONE THIS BEFORE--  
TAKE OUT THE BIGGEST, UGLIEST ONE--AND THE REST FALL INTO LINE!

GUARDIANS--  
TAKE HIM DOWN!

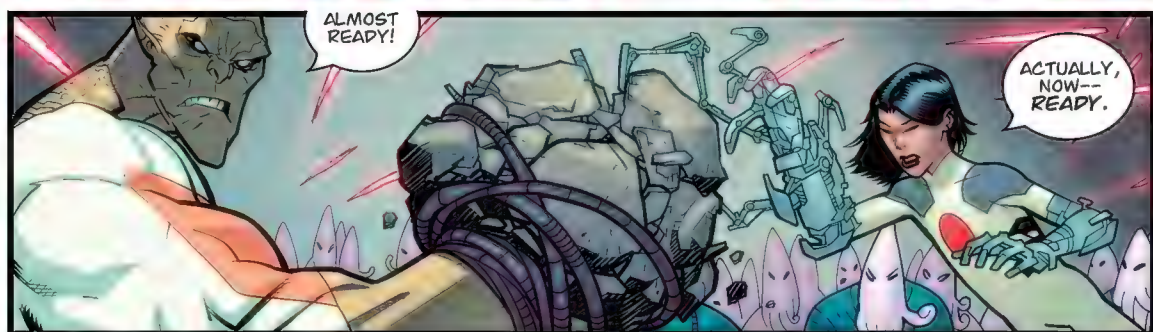
ON IT!!



WE DON'T BECOME DEFEATED SO EASILY!

BEFORE NOW YOU CATCH US OFF GUARD!  
NOW WE AM PUNCTUAL!  
NOW WE AM POWERED UP!







COMING  
AT YOU!

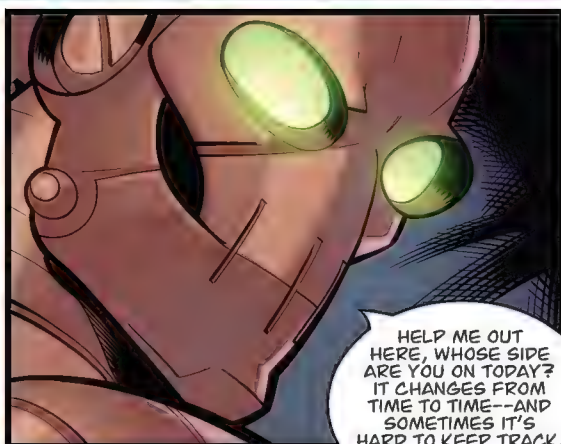
**WIRAKOOM!!!**



CAPES AND  
WOLF C.O.R.P.S.  
STAND DOWN.  
THE THREAT  
HAS BEEN  
NEUTRALIZED.

DON'T THINK  
WE EVEN  
NEEDED THE FULL  
GUARDIANS  
ROSTER...  
NICE.





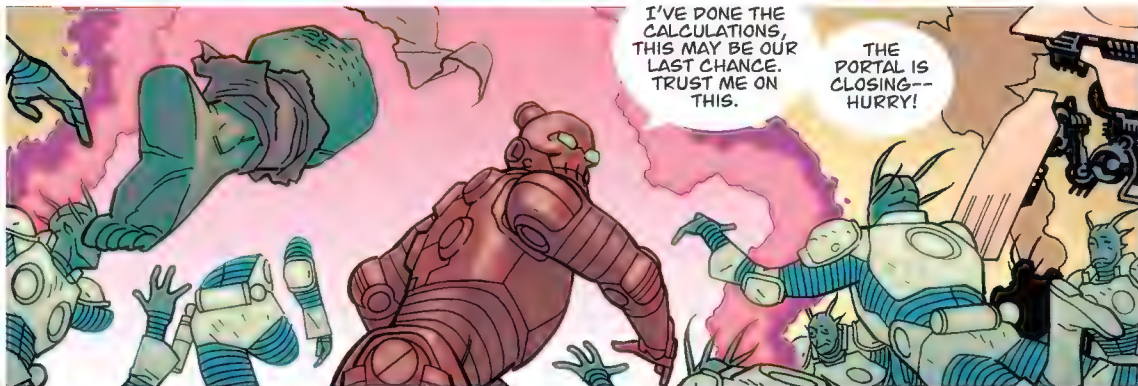




HERE'S WHAT HAPPENED.

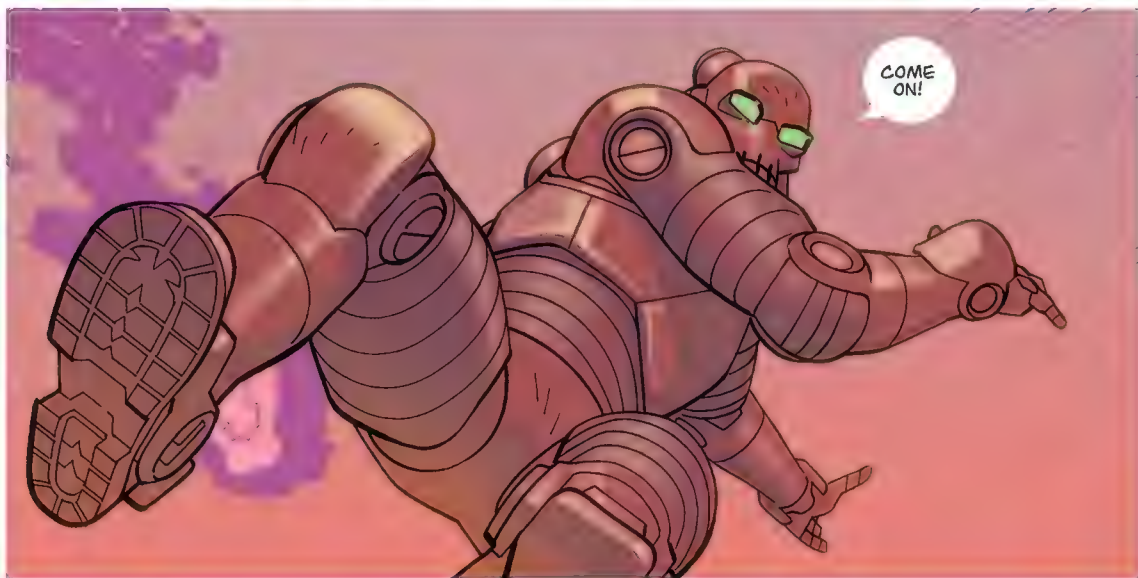
ROBOT, STOP  
RIGHT NOW. WE  
DON'T KNOW WHAT  
WE'D BE RUNNING  
INTO--OR HOW THEIR  
DIMENSION WILL  
AFFECT US!

WE CAN  
PLAN FOR  
THIS, DO IT  
ANOTHER  
TIME!

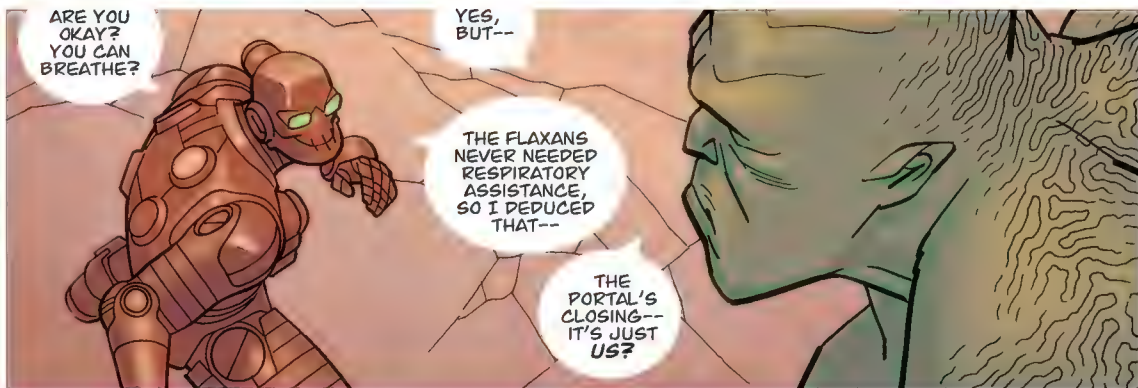


I'VE DONE THE  
CALCULATIONS,  
THIS MAY BE OUR  
LAST CHANCE.  
TRUST ME ON  
THIS.

THE  
PORTAL IS  
CLOSING--  
HURRY!



COME  
ON!



ARE YOU  
OKAY?  
YOU CAN  
BREATHE?

YES,  
BUT--

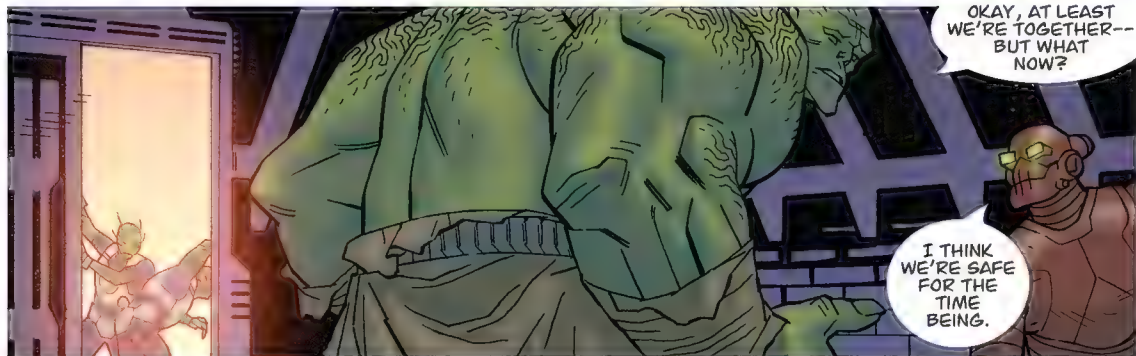
THE FLAXANS  
NEVER NEEDED  
RESPIRATORY  
ASSISTANCE,  
SO I DEDUCED  
THAT--

THE  
PORTAL'S  
CLOSING--  
IT'S JUST  
US?











IT'S BEEN DAYS SINCE YOU'VE EATEN. JUST TRY IT... IT'S NOT SO BAD.

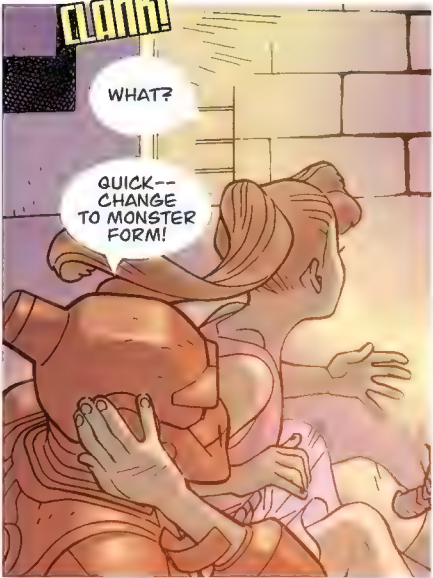
THE SMELL, OH, GOD--THEY SMELL WORSE THAN THEY LOOK!



**CLUNK!**

WHAT?

QUICK-- CHANGE TO MONSTER FORM!



**CRAP!** WHAT ARE THEY--



ᠠᠨᠠᠨᠠᠨᠠᠨᠠᠨ  
ᠠᠨᠠᠨᠠᠨᠠᠨᠠᠨ  
ᠠᠨᠠᠨᠠᠨᠠᠨᠠᠨ



**SLAM!**

ᠠᠨᠠᠨᠠᠨᠠᠨᠠᠨ  
ᠠᠨᠠᠨᠠᠨᠠᠨᠠᠨ  
ᠠᠨᠠᠨᠠᠨᠠᠨᠠᠨ

ᠠᠨᠠᠨᠠᠨᠠᠨᠠᠨ  
ᠠᠨᠠᠨᠠᠨᠠᠨᠠᠨ  
ᠠᠨᠠᠨᠠᠨᠠᠨᠠᠨ  
**EKK!**

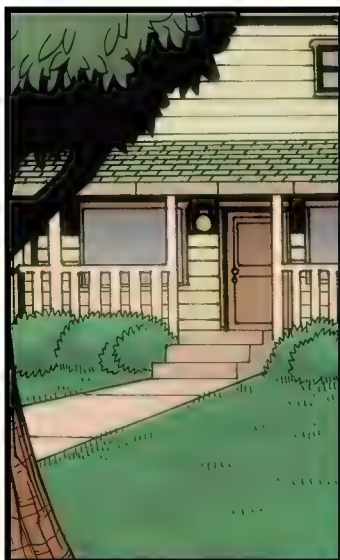
WHAT'S HIS PROBLEM?



WELL, I'M ONLY UNDERSTANDING PART OF WHAT HE'S SAYING-- BUT IT APPEARS HE EXPECTS YOU TO TRY AND EAT HIM.

I THINK THEY WERE FEEDING HIM TO YOU.





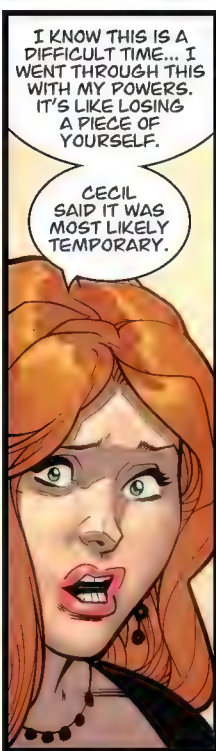
THAT TOOK FOREVER.

WELL, I CAN'T FLY AS FAST AS YOU COULD.

JUST WAIT UNTIL YOU HAVE TO DRIVE SOMEWHERE.

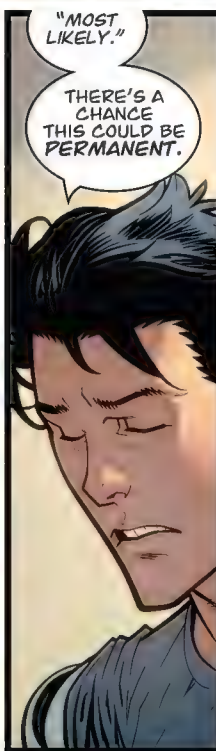


MY GOD... I FELT SO... HELPLESS TODAY.



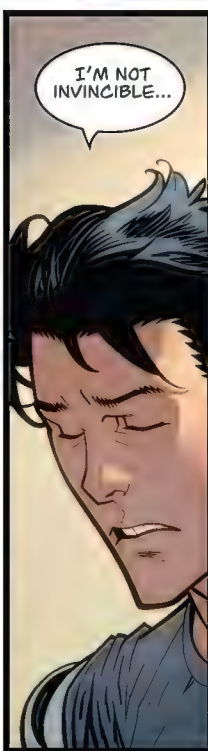
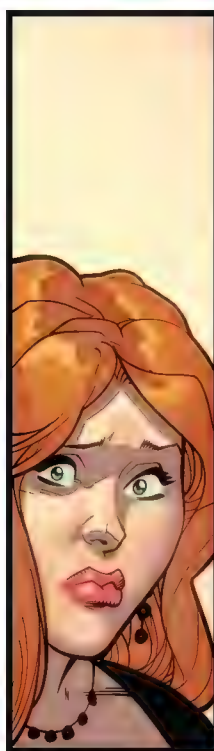
I KNOW THIS IS A DIFFICULT TIME... I WENT THROUGH THIS WITH MY POWERS. IT'S LIKE LOSING A PIECE OF YOURSELF.

CECIL SAID IT WAS MOST LIKELY TEMPORARY.



"MOST LIKELY."

THERE'S A CHANCE THIS COULD BE PERMANENT.



I'M NOT INVINCIBLE...



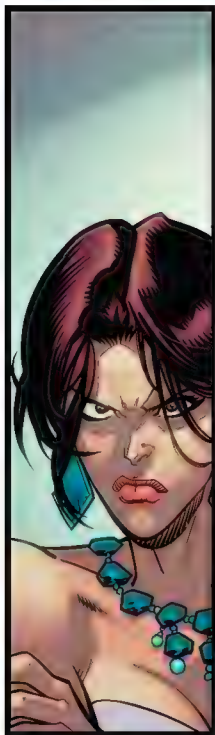
...AND I MAY NEVER BE INVINCIBLE AGAIN.



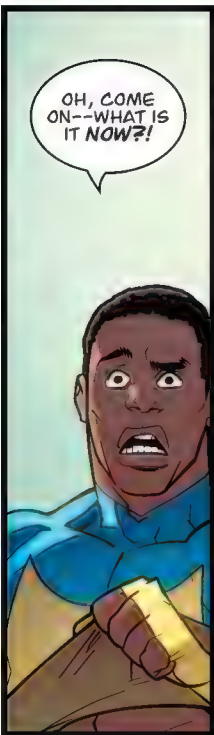


SORRY, SORRY. WE TOOK THE GUY OUT PRETTY QUICKLY, BUT WE ALL HAD TO HANG AROUND AND SUPERVISE THEM BEING TAKEN INTO CUSTODY.

Y'KNOW... TO MAKE SURE HE DIDN'T BREAK FREE AND KILL A BUNCH OF PEOPLE... IT'S IMPORTANT STUFF.

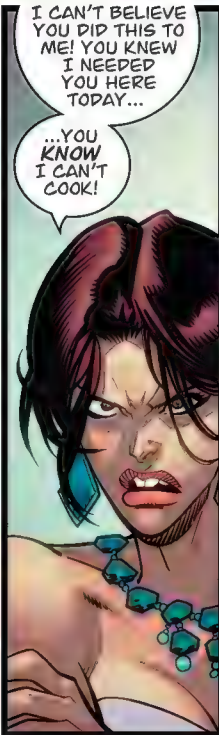


OH, COME ON--WHAT IS IT NOW?!



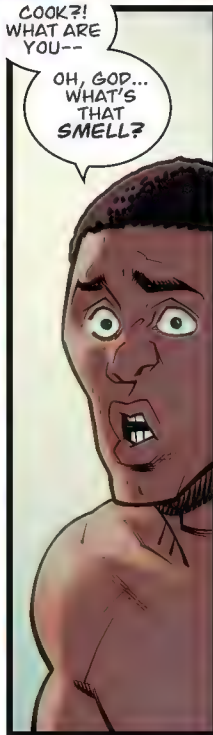
I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU DID THIS TO ME! YOU KNEW I NEEDED YOU HERE TODAY...

...YOU KNOW I CAN'T COOK!



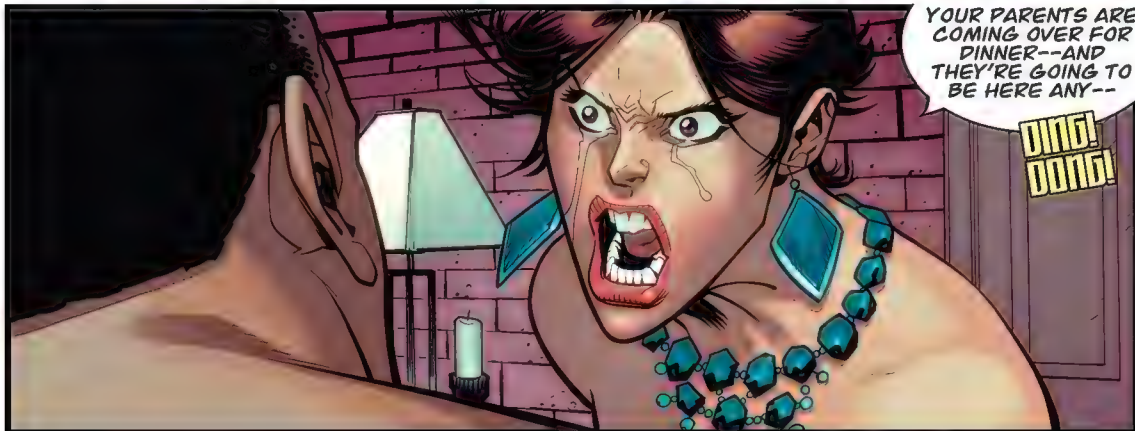
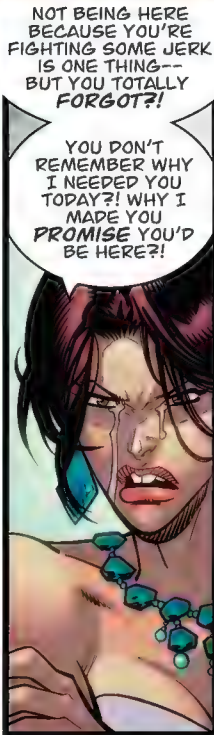
COOK?! WHAT ARE YOU--

OH, GOD... WHAT'S THAT SMELL?



NOT BEING HERE BECAUSE YOU'RE FIGHTING SOME JERK IS ONE THING-- BUT YOU TOTALLY FORGOT?!

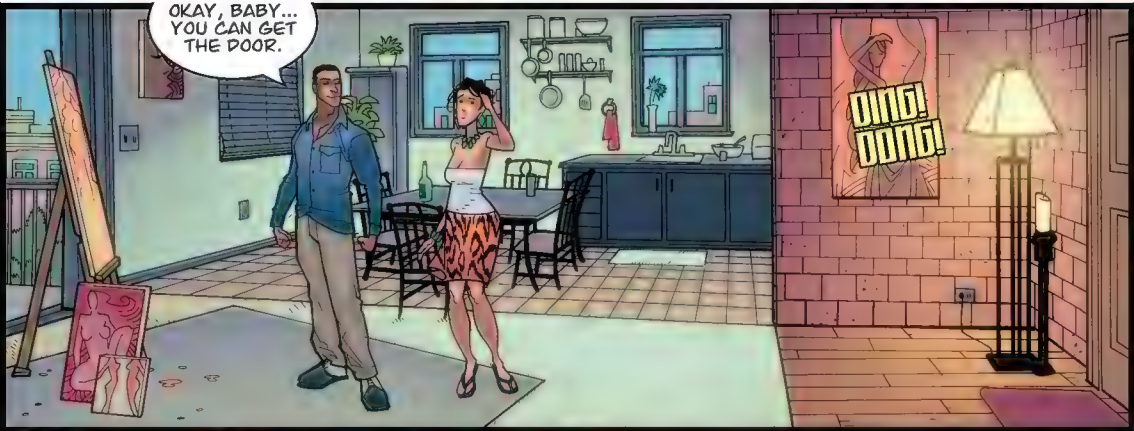
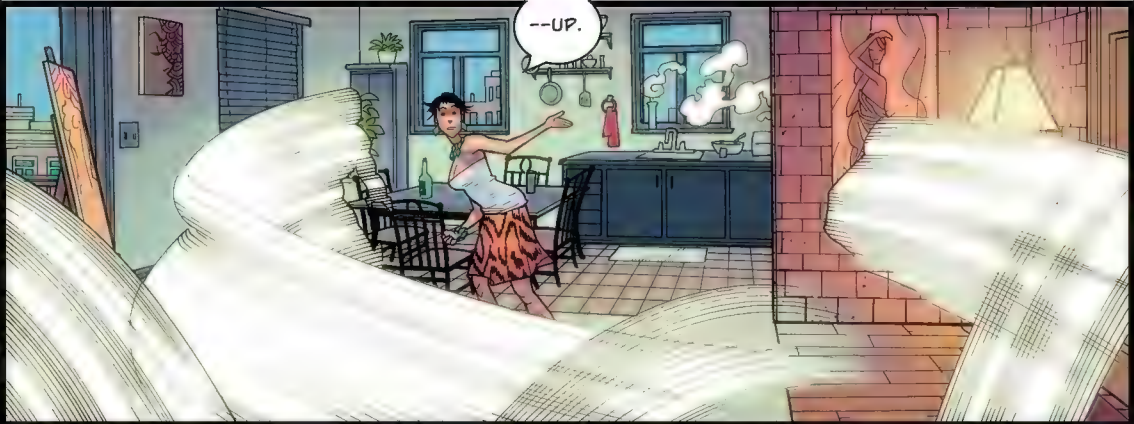
YOU DON'T REMEMBER WHY I NEEDED YOU TODAY?! WHY I MADE YOU PROMISE YOU'D BE HERE?!



YOUR PARENTS ARE COMING OVER FOR DINNER--AND THEY'RE GOING TO BE HERE ANY--

DING!  
DING!

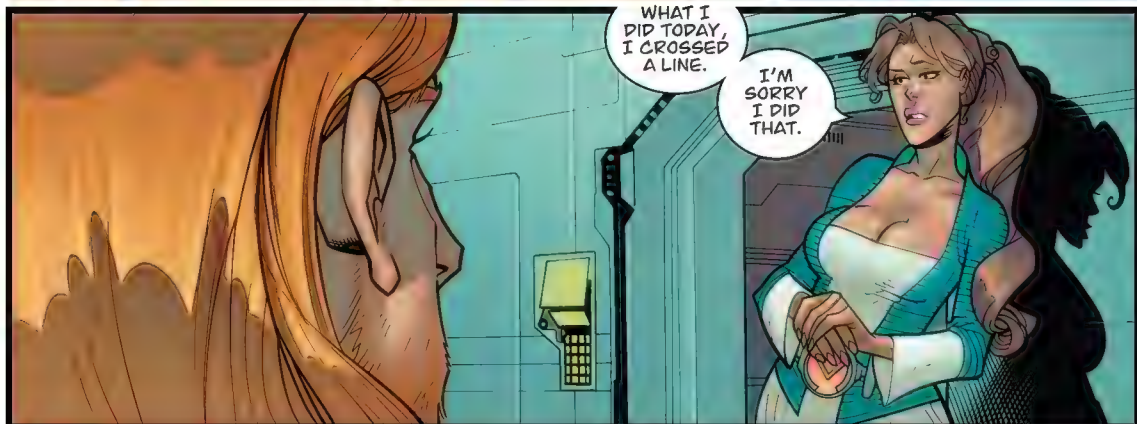
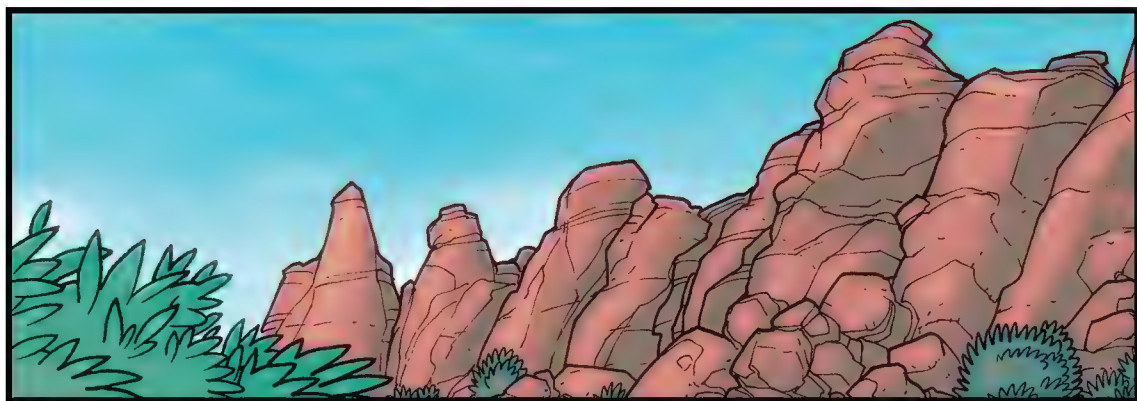




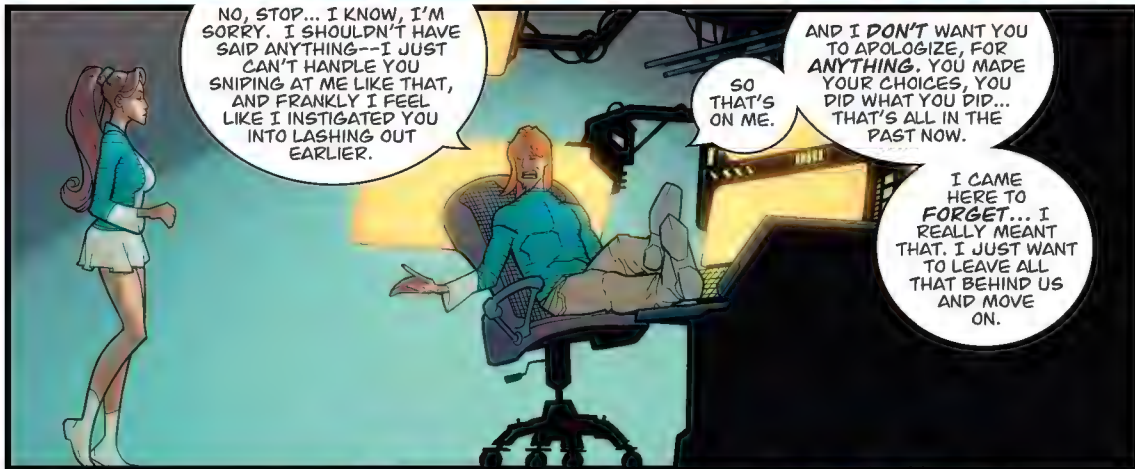
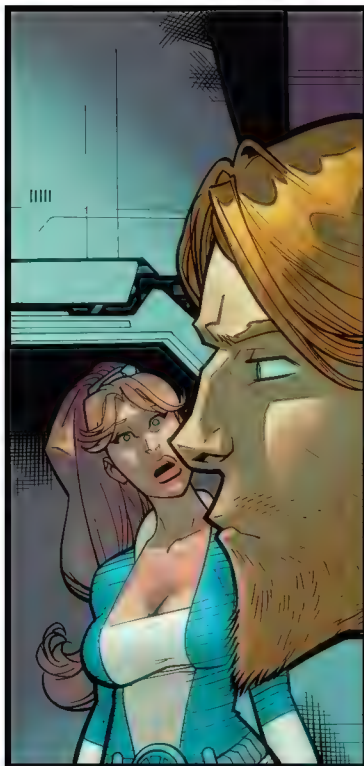












NO, STOP... I KNOW, I'M SORRY. I SHOULDN'T HAVE SAID ANYTHING--I JUST CAN'T HANDLE YOU SNIPING AT ME LIKE THAT, AND FRANKLY I FEEL LIKE I INSTIGATED YOU INTO LASHING OUT EARLIER.

SO THAT'S ON ME.

AND I DON'T WANT YOU TO APOLOGIZE, FOR ANYTHING. YOU MADE YOUR CHOICES, YOU DID WHAT YOU DID... THAT'S ALL IN THE PAST NOW.

I CAME HERE TO **FORGET**... I REALLY MEANT THAT. I JUST WANT TO LEAVE ALL THAT BEHIND US AND MOVE ON.

YOU'RE SERIOUS?!

YOU REALLY EXPECT ME TO FORGET... ALL OF IT?







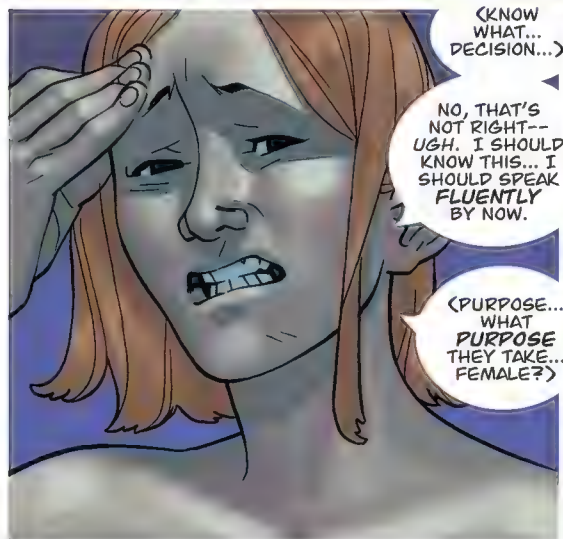
(TOO LONG  
THEY HAVE HER  
GONE.)



(DO NOT WORRY.  
SHE IS STRONG.  
SHE WILL RETURN.  
SHE ALWAYS  
DOES.)

(I CANNOT  
CONFORM.)

(YOU MEAN  
YOU CANNOT  
CONTROL YOUR  
EMOTIONS, I BELIEVE.  
YOUR FLAXAN TONGUE  
IS BETTER. BUT  
THERE IS STILL  
MUCH TO LEARN.)



(KNOW  
WHAT...  
DECISION...)

NO, THAT'S  
NOT RIGHT--  
UGH. I SHOULD  
KNOW THIS... I  
SHOULD SPEAK  
FLUENTLY  
BY NOW.

(PURPOSE...  
WHAT  
PURPOSE  
THEY TAKE...  
FEMALE?)



(THEY SPOKE  
OF TRIALS. I  
BELIEVE OUR  
CHANCELLOR CHOSE  
HER TO BE HIS  
CHAMPION. OTHER  
CHANCELLORS  
TRAVEL WITH THEIR  
CHAMPION FOR  
COMPETITION.)

(BATTLES  
ARE FOUGHT  
TO THE DEATH.  
BUT I AM SURE  
SHE WILL BEST  
THEM. I'VE  
NEVER SEEN  
ANYTHING  
LIKE--)

(THEY RETURN--  
HIDE!)





(QUICKLY,  
BEFORE THE  
BEAST TURNS  
ON US!)



MUST REALLY  
BAFFLE THEM  
HOW I BREAK  
FREE OF MY  
RESTRAINTS ALL  
THE TIME.

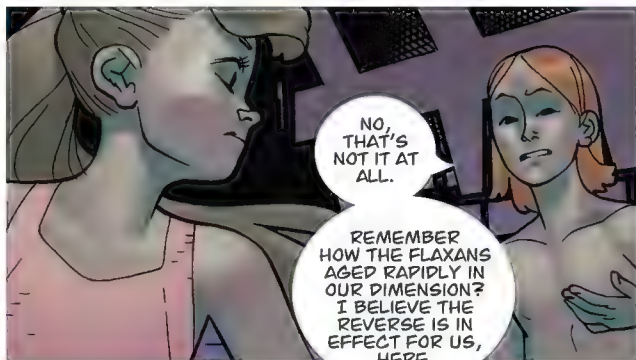
YOU  
GUYS  
OKAY?

HUNGRY--  
AND RELIEVED  
TO SEE YOU.



WHY DO I  
STILL WEAR  
THIS BELT? I'M  
CLEARLY NOT  
GROWING ANY  
OLDER.

IT MUST  
NOT BE  
WORKING IN  
THIS DIMENSION.



NO,  
THAT'S  
NOT IT AT  
ALL.

REMEMBER  
HOW THE FLAXANS  
AGED RAPIDLY IN  
OUR DIMENSION?  
I BELIEVE THE  
REVERSE IS IN  
EFFECT FOR US,  
HERE.



HAVEN'T  
YOU NOTICED?  
WE'VE BEEN  
HERE FOUR  
YEARS  
ALREADY.

NEITHER  
OF US  
HAVE AGED  
A DAY.





SEVEN-  
HUNDRED  
YEARS  
WE LIVED  
TOGETHER!

I KNEW YOU  
BETTER THAN  
ANYONE ON EARTH  
HAS EVER KNOWN  
ANYONE! I LOVED  
YOU MORE THAN  
ANYONE HAS  
EVER LOVED  
ANYONE!

AND YOU  
THREW IT  
AWAY--ALL  
OF IT--AFTER  
ONE SINGLE  
MISTAKE!



I'LL  
NEVER  
FORGET  
THAT!



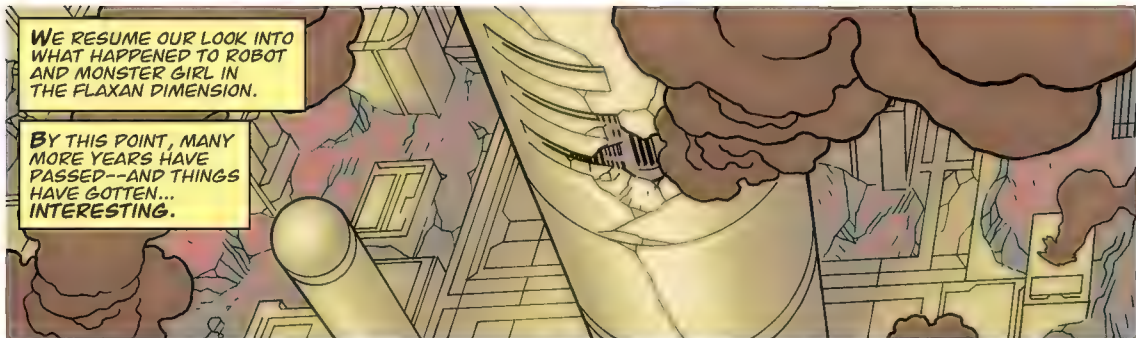




# CHAPTER 93







WE RESUME OUR LOOK INTO WHAT HAPPENED TO ROBOT AND MONSTER GIRL IN THE FLAXAN DIMENSION.

BY THIS POINT, MANY MORE YEARS HAVE PASSED--AND THINGS HAVE GOTTEN... INTERESTING.



(YOU HAVE DISRUPTED MY ROYAL CHAMBERS, DAMAGED THE GREAT HALLS OF TRUNG AND CORRUPTED A CHAMPION OF OUR ARENA THAT HAS ENTERTAINED ME SINCE I WAS A BOY.)

(I HAVE A SPECIAL PUNISHMENT SET ASIDE JUST FOR YOU--EARTH MAN!)

ZZOAK!



WELL...

...THIS COULD HAVE GONE BETTER.





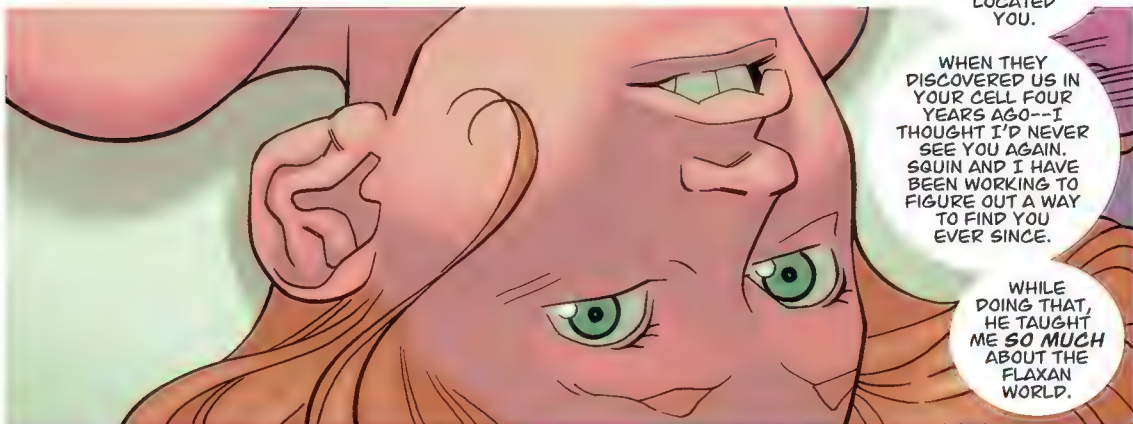
THAT PLAN TOOK **TWENTY YEARS**, REX. SQUIN LOST HIS LIFE WORKING TO HELP US GAIN ACCESS TO THE THRONE ROOM.

THAT WAS SUPPOSED TO WORK... AND YOU DON'T EVEN SEEM UPSET.

THE PLAN IS **STILL WORKING**, SQUIN FREELY GAVE HIS LIFE FOR THIS CAUSE--AND HIS SACRIFICE WILL NOT BE IN VAIN.

THAT ATTACK ON THE EMPEROR WAS ONLY THE **BEGINNING**.

I'M SORRY I COULDN'T COMMUNICATE THE INTRICACIES OF MY PLAN--OUR ATTACK HAD TO HAPPEN IMMEDIATELY AFTER I'D LOCATED YOU.



WHEN THEY DISCOVERED US IN YOUR CELL FOUR YEARS AGO--I THOUGHT I'D NEVER SEE YOU AGAIN. SQUIN AND I HAVE BEEN WORKING TO FIGURE OUT A WAY TO FIND YOU EVER SINCE.

WHILE DOING THAT, HE TAUGHT ME **SO MUCH** ABOUT THE FLAXAN WORLD.

DO YOU KNOW WHAT THEY DO? WHY THEY INVADE SO MANY OTHER DIMENSIONS--LIKE HOW THEY'VE REPEATEDLY ATTEMPTED TO INVADE OURS?

THEY'RE HARVESTING **SLAVES**. IT'S HARD FOR US TO RECOGNIZE, BUT ALL THE VARIOUS LIFE-FORMS WE'VE SEEN--THEY'RE FROM OTHER DIMENSIONS.

THE FLAXANS ARE A WARRIOR RACE, THEY HAVE ONLY SOLDIERS. ALL OTHER TASKS ARE PERFORMED BY SLAVES.

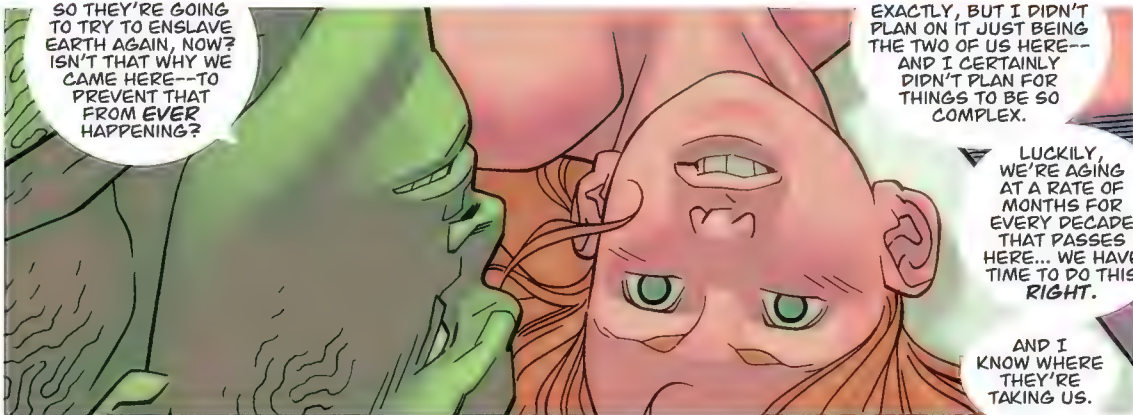


SO THEY'RE GOING TO TRY TO ENSLAVE EARTH AGAIN, NOW? ISN'T THAT WHY WE CAME HERE--TO PREVENT THAT FROM EVER HAPPENING?

EXACTLY, BUT I DIDN'T PLAN ON IT JUST BEING THE TWO OF US HERE--AND I CERTAINLY DIDN'T PLAN FOR THINGS TO BE SO COMPLEX.

LUCKILY WE'RE AGING AT A RATE OF MONTHS FOR EVERY DECADE THAT PASSES HERE... WE HAVE TIME TO DO THIS RIGHT.

AND I KNOW WHERE THEY'RE TAKING US.





WHEN THEY HARVEST SLAVES FROM ANOTHER DIMENSION, IT IS USUALLY DONE WITH THE SET PURPOSE THAT THE SLAVES WILL BE USED FOR ALREADY IN MIND.

THE VERY FIRST TIME THEY INVAPED OUR DIMENSION, AND WERE THWARTED, THEY NEEDED THE POPULATION OF EARTH TO WORK IN THEIR MINERAL MINES.

WHEN THEY WERE STOPPED, IT WAS THE WORK OF ONE INDIVIDUAL, INVINCIBLE'S FATHER, **OMNI-MAN**. A PLAN WAS CONCEIVED AND CARRIED OUT TO BRING HIM INTO THE FLAXAN DIMENSION, TO REMOVE HIM FROM THE EQUATION.\*

HERE HE IS KNOWN AS **THE DESTROYER**.

\*ISSUE 3.

HE WAS HELD CAPTIVE FOR A TIME. THEY'D DEvised SOME WAY TO INHIBIT HIS NATURAL ABILITIES. BUT HIS CAPTIVITY DID NOT LAST.

TO SAY THEIR PLAN BACKFIRED ON THEM WOULD BE A MASSIVE UNDERSTATEMENT.

IN THE END, THE WAR THEY FOUGHT AGAINST ONE MAN LASTED NEARLY A YEAR IN THIS DIMENSION.

AS A RESULT, THE FLAXANS' EMPIRE WAS IN SHAMBLES, AND KLAXIA, THE CROWN CITY OF THEIR CIVILIZATION, WAS DESTROYED.





IT TOOK THEM GENERATIONS TO PREPARE FOR THEIR NEXT ASSAULT ON EARTH. WHICH WAS DONE WITH THE INTENTION OF CHARGING THE HUMAN POPULATION WITH REBUILDING THEIR BELOVED CITY, KLAXIA.

WHICH IS WHERE THEY ARE TAKING US NOW. AS WE ARE FROM EARTH, IT WILL BE OUR TASK, AND OUR TASK ALONE TO REBUILD A CITY THAT HAS LAID IN WASTE FOR CENTURIES.

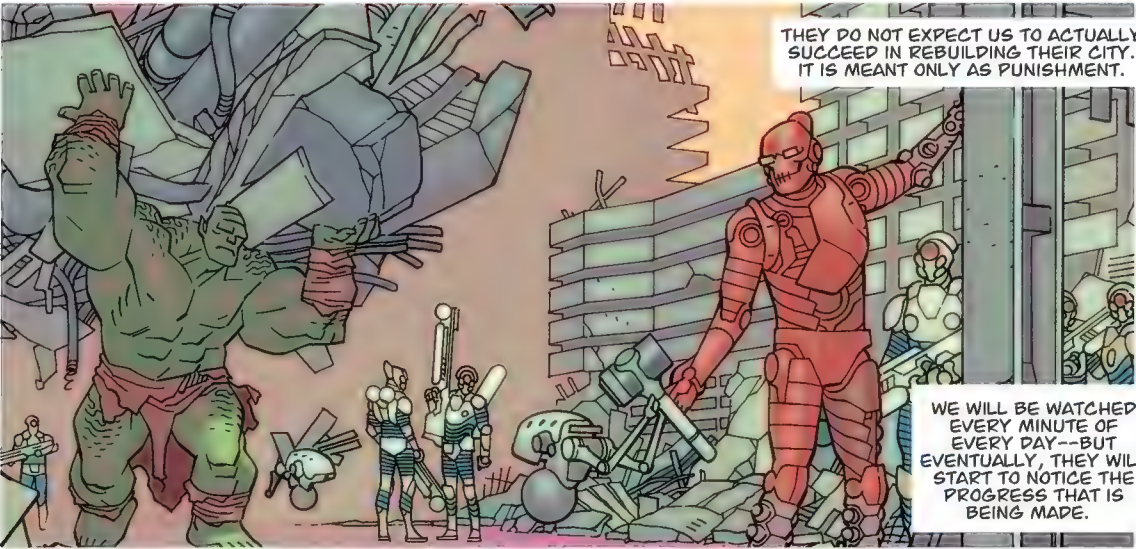
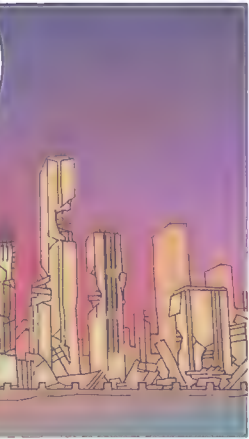


SO WE REBUILD A CITY FOR THEM? HOW IS THAT PART OF OUR PLAN-- HOW DOES THAT HELP US?

DID SOMETHING HAPPEN TO YOU OVER THE LAST FOUR YEARS THAT MADE YOU LESS SMART?

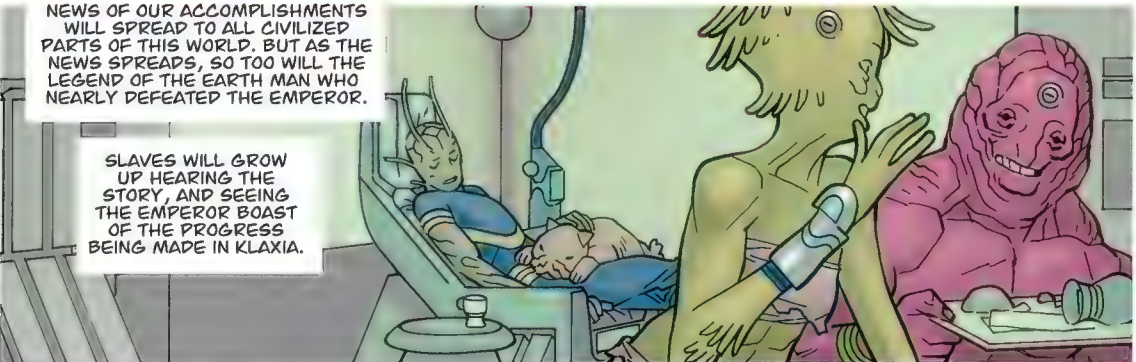
YOU'RE NOT TAKING INTO ACCOUNT TIME. ONLY A MATTER OF WEEKS HAS PASSED ON EARTH IN OUR DECADES ON THIS WORLD... THIS WILL NOT BE EASY... IT WILL TAKE A SUBSTANTIAL AMOUNT OF TIME.

BUT TIME IS ON OUR SIDE.



THEY DO NOT EXPECT US TO ACTUALLY SUCCEED IN REBUILDING THEIR CITY. IT IS MEANT ONLY AS PUNISHMENT.

WE WILL BE WATCHED EVERY MINUTE OF EVERY DAY--BUT EVENTUALLY, THEY WILL START TO NOTICE THE PROGRESS THAT IS BEING MADE.



NEWS OF OUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS WILL SPREAD TO ALL CIVILIZED PARTS OF THIS WORLD. BUT AS THE NEWS SPREADS, SO TOO WILL THE LEGEND OF THE EARTH MAN WHO NEARLY DEFEATED THE EMPEROR.

SLAVES WILL GROW UP HEARING THE STORY, AND SEEING THE EMPEROR BOAST OF THE PROGRESS BEING MADE IN KLAXIA.





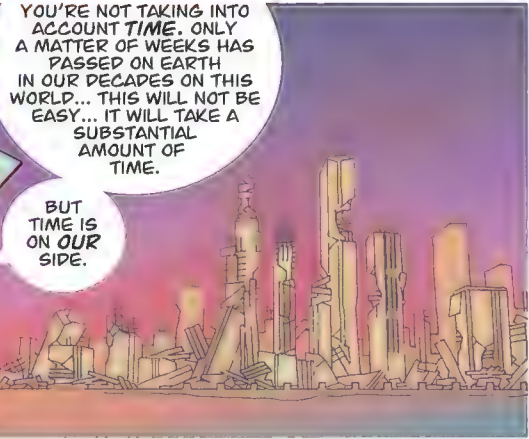
IT TOOK THEM GENERATIONS TO PREPARE FOR THEIR NEXT ASSAULT ON EARTH. WHICH WAS DONE WITH THE INTENTION OF CHARGING THE HUMAN POPULATION WITH REBUILDING THEIR BELOVED CITY, KLAXIA.

WHICH IS WHERE THEY ARE TAKING US NOW. AS WE ARE FROM EARTH, IT WILL BE OUR TASK, AND OUR TASK ALONE TO REBUILD A CITY THAT HAS LAID IN WASTE FOR CENTURIES.



YOU'RE NOT TAKING INTO ACCOUNT TIME. ONLY A MATTER OF WEEKS HAS PASSED ON EARTH IN OUR DECADES ON THIS WORLD... THIS WILL NOT BE EASY... IT WILL TAKE A SUBSTANTIAL AMOUNT OF TIME.

BUT TIME IS ON OUR SIDE.



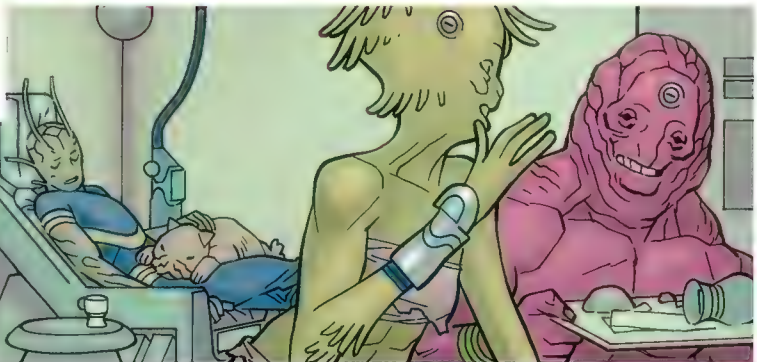
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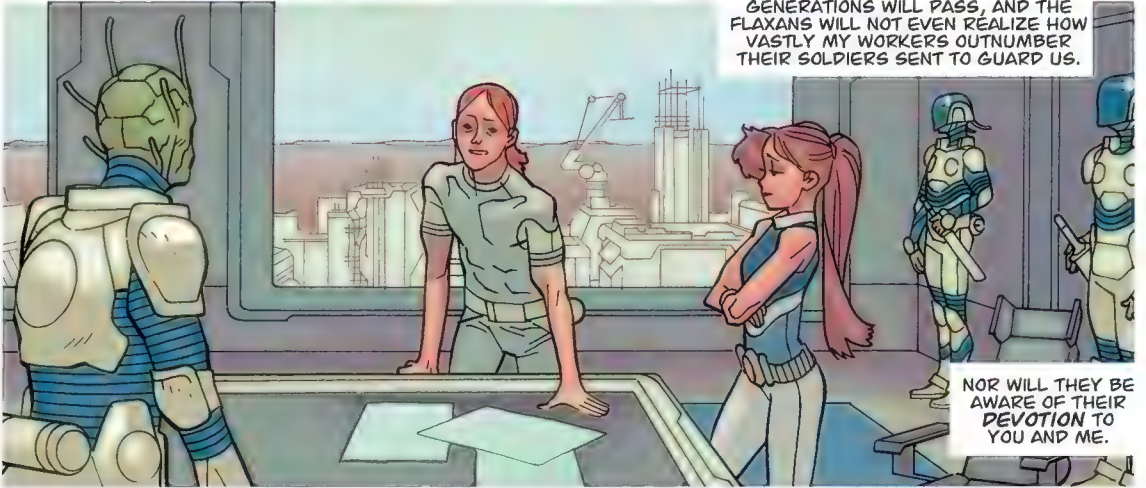






IT WILL ONLY BE A MATTER OF YEARS BEFORE THE PROJECT IS ACTUALLY TAKEN SERIOUSLY, AND WE'RE SENT HUNDREDS OF WORKERS TO AID IN OUR TASK.

WORKERS THAT KNOW OF OUR FEAT, STORMING THE EMPEROR'S THRONE ROOM. WORKERS WITH NO LOVE FOR THE FLAXAN EMPIRE.



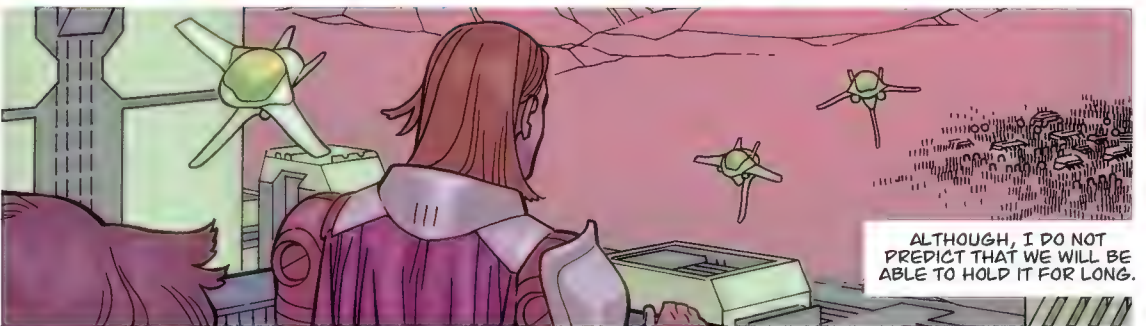
GENERATIONS WILL PASS, AND THE FLAXANS WILL NOT EVEN REALIZE HOW VASTLY MY WORKERS OUTNUMBER THEIR SOLDIERS SENT TO GUARD US.

NOR WILL THEY BE AWARE OF THEIR DEVOTION TO YOU AND ME.



THE REVOLT WILL BE SWIFT.

ON THE EVE OF THE COMPLETE RESTORATION OF KLAXIA-- WE WILL CONTROL THE CITY.

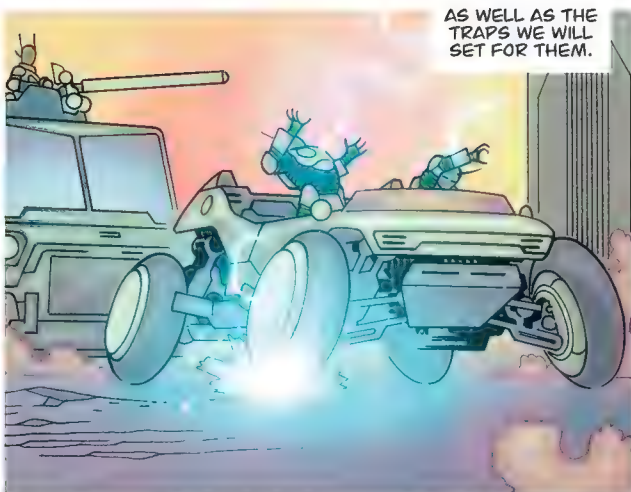


ALTHOUGH, I DO NOT PREDICT THAT WE WILL BE ABLE TO HOLD IT FOR LONG.

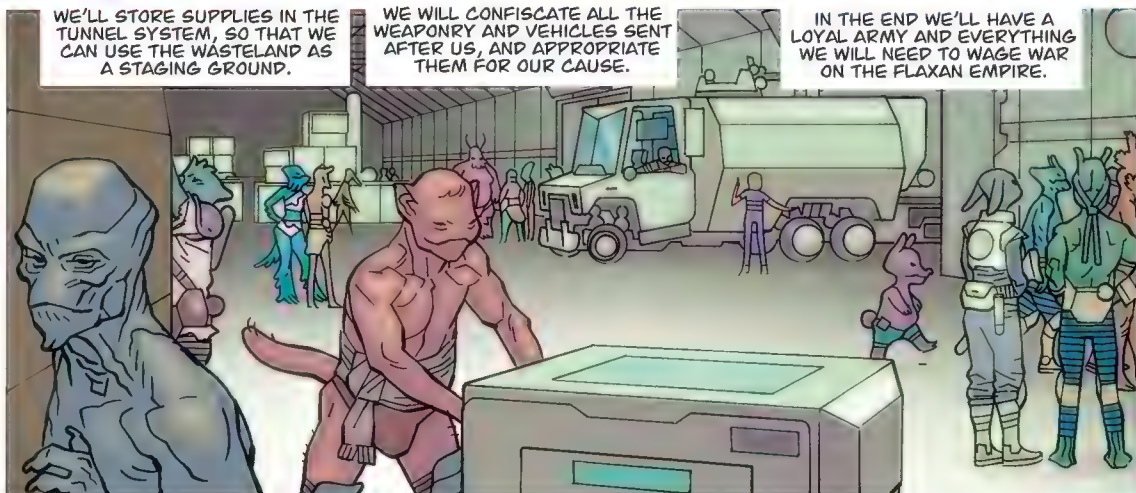




BUT THE FLAXAN ARMY  
WILL BE UNAWARE OF  
THE TUNNEL SYSTEM WE  
WILL HAVE BUILT  
UNDER THE CITY.



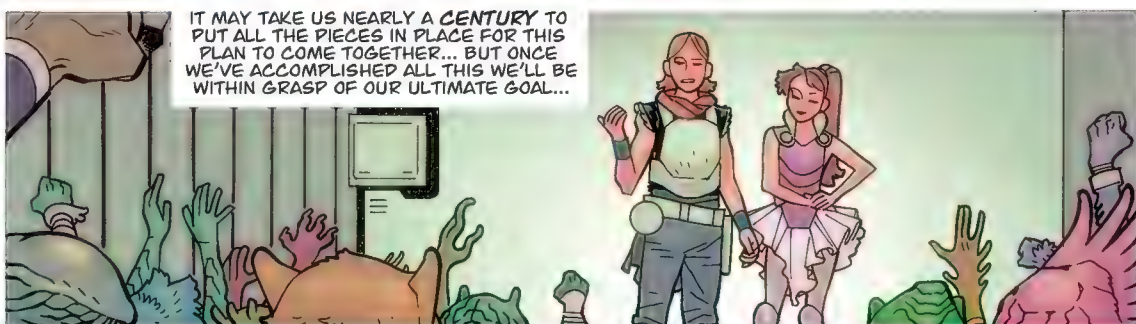
AS WELL AS THE  
TRAPS WE WILL  
SET FOR THEM.



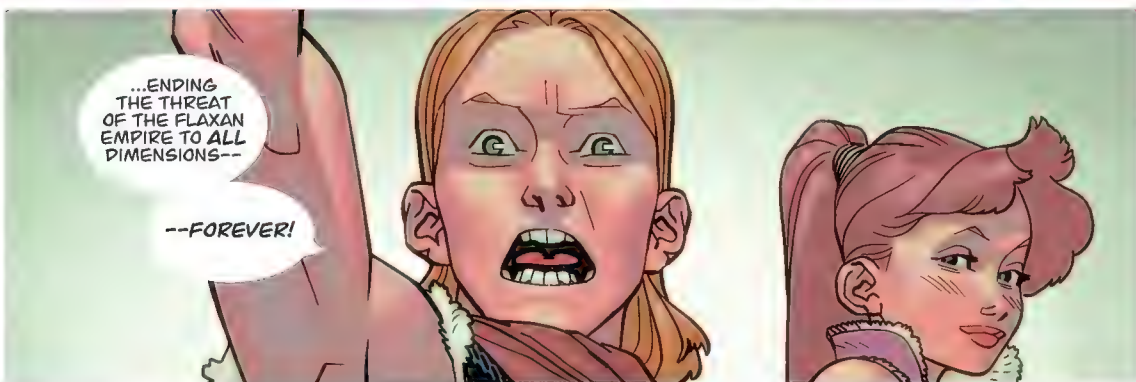
WE'LL STORE SUPPLIES IN THE  
TUNNEL SYSTEM, SO THAT WE  
CAN USE THE WASTELAND AS  
A STAGING GROUND.

WE WILL CONFISCATE ALL THE  
WEAPONRY AND VEHICLES SENT  
AFTER US, AND APPROPRIATE  
THEM FOR OUR CAUSE.

IN THE END WE'LL HAVE A  
LOYAL ARMY AND EVERYTHING  
WE WILL NEED TO WAGE WAR  
ON THE FLAXAN EMPIRE.



IT MAY TAKE US NEARLY A CENTURY TO  
PUT ALL THE PIECES IN PLACE FOR THIS  
PLAN TO COME TOGETHER... BUT ONCE  
WE'VE ACCOMPLISHED ALL THIS WE'LL BE  
WITHIN GRASP OF OUR ULTIMATE GOAL...



...ENDING  
THE THREAT  
OF THE FLAXAN  
EMPIRE TO ALL  
DIMENSIONS--

--FOREVER!

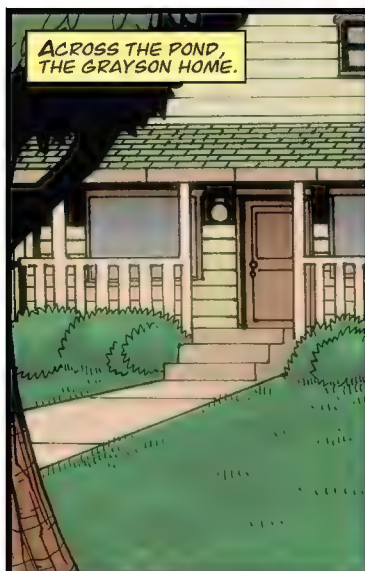












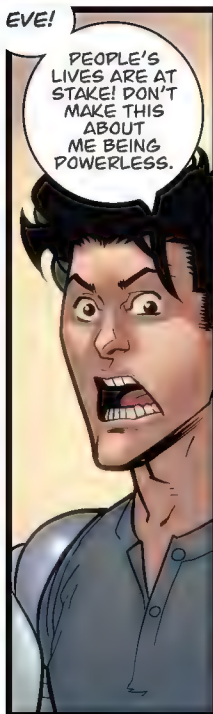
ACROSS THE POND,  
THE GRAYSON HOME.



YOU'VE GOT TO HELP STOP  
THEM! THEY'RE IN THE  
MIDDLE OF LONDON! WE  
CAN'T LET ANOTHER  
MAJOR CITY GET  
DESTROYED!

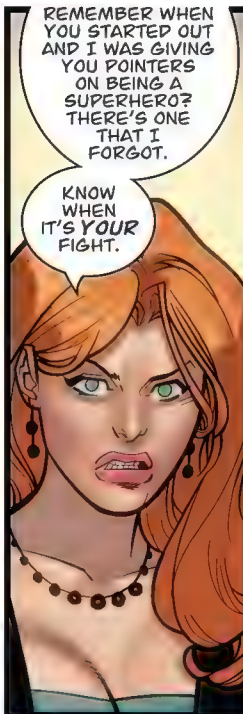
AGAIN!

I'M NOT  
GOING TO LEAVE  
YOU HERE,  
UNPROTECTED. IF  
THIS IS A FULL-  
SCALE INVASION, IT  
COULD REACH  
THIS AREA.



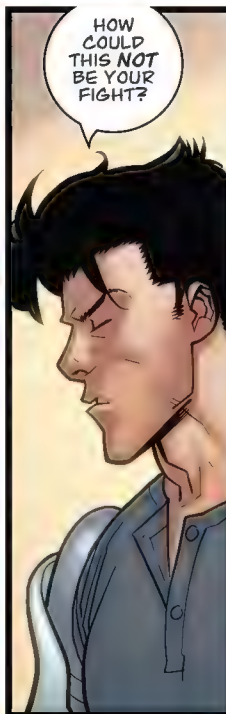
EVE!

PEOPLE'S  
LIVES ARE AT  
STAKE! DON'T  
MAKE THIS  
ABOUT  
ME BEING  
POWERLESS.



REMEMBER WHEN  
YOU STARTED OUT  
AND I WAS GIVING  
YOU POINTERS  
ON BEING A  
SUPERHERO?  
THERE'S ONE  
THAT I  
FORGOT.

KNOW  
WHEN  
IT'S YOUR  
FIGHT.

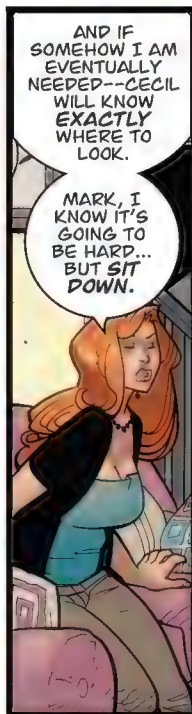


HOW  
COULD  
THIS NOT  
BE YOUR  
FIGHT?



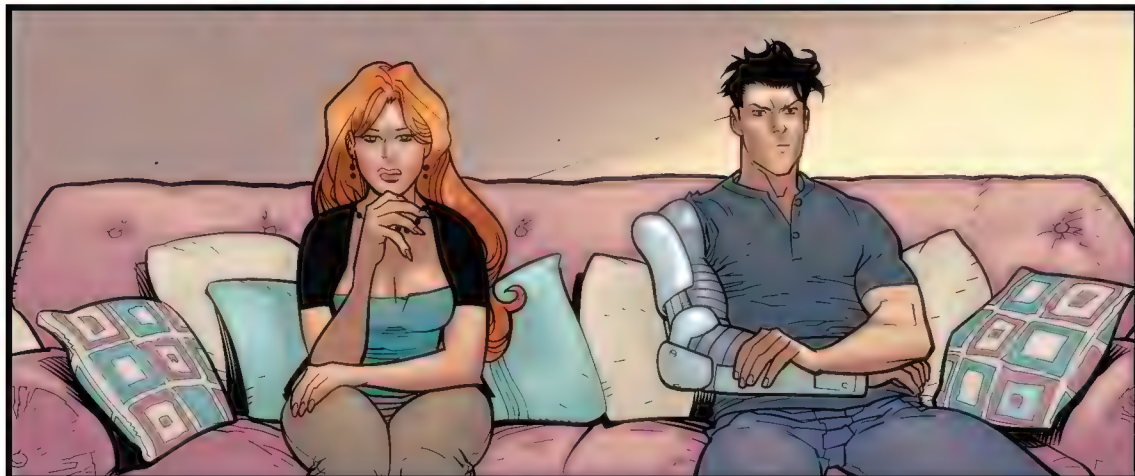
HOW WOULD I EVEN  
GET THERE? I CAN'T  
FLY AS FAST AS  
YOU COULD.

FACE IT,  
THERE ARE  
COUNTLESS  
OTHER  
SUPERHEROES  
WHO ARE FASTER,  
STRONGER AND  
SMARTER THAN  
ME... AND THEY'RE  
NO DOUBT  
ALREADY ON  
THEIR WAY.



AND IF  
SOMEHOW I AM  
EVENTUALLY  
NEEDED--CECIL  
WILL KNOW  
EXACTLY  
WHERE TO  
LOOK.

MARK, I  
KNOW IT'S  
GOING TO  
BE HARD...  
BUT SIT  
DOWN.







I'M SORRY, GUYS... I'VE GOT A MEETING AT THIS GALLERY AND I, UM... NEED TO GO.



ARE YOU **SERIOUS?! WITH WHAT'S HAPPENING IN LONDON? YOU'RE JUST GOING TO GO?**

WE'LL PROBABLY SEE YOUR BROTHER ON TV! CANCEL IT.

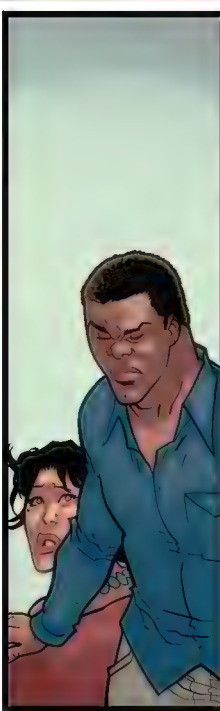
I'VE GOTTA MAKE A LIVING, MOM.

THIS GALLERY OPENING ISN'T FOR MONTHS, I CAN'T BLOW IT BY SKIPPING THIS MEETING.



HOW DID YOU AND YOUR BROTHER END UP SO DIFFERENT?

IT'S A DAMN SHAME.



THE REAL SHAME IS THAT YOU--!



OKAY, I NEED TO BE GOING NOW. DON'T GET TOO WORRIED ABOUT WHAT'S ON THE TV, IT'S HALF A WORLD AWAY.

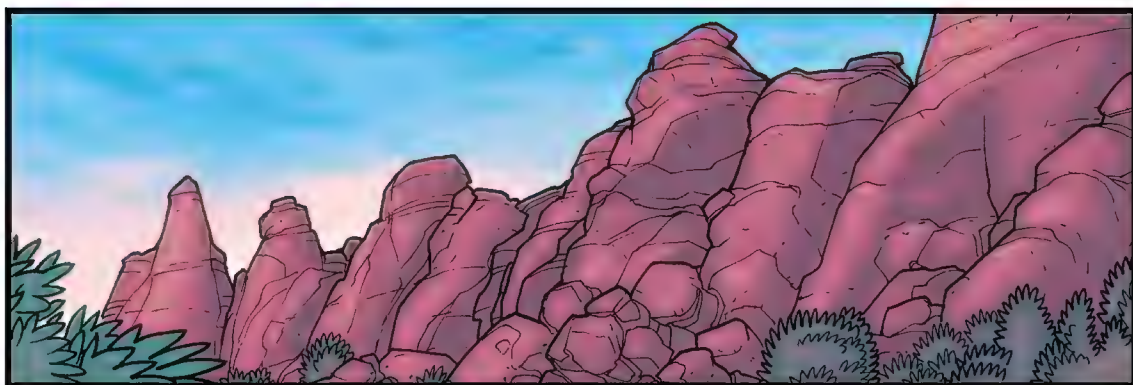


I HEAR TYRONE HAS A NEW COSTUME, KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR IT.

BYE.







IT'S NOT THE FLAXANS. THERE IS NO WAY. THAT'S JUST NOT POSSIBLE.

IT'S SOMEONE ELSE. ANOTHER FORCE FROM ANOTHER DIMENSION, USING SIMILAR ARMOR... IT CAN'T BE THE FLAXANS.

WELL, IT SURE AS HELL LOOKS LIKE IT'S THEM! SO STOP ARGUING WITH ME AND START SCRAMBLING TEAMS!

THIS ARGUMENT IS BARELY TAKING UP A FRACTION OF MY COGNITIVE BANDWIDTH. I'VE ALREADY BEGUN SCRAMBLING TEAMS.

THE ACTIONEERS ARE ON SITE. CAPES, WOLF-MAN AND THE WOLF C.O.R.P.S. ARE ON STANDBY.

TWO GUARDIANS TEAMS ARE EN ROUTE AND WE'RE ABOUT TO DISPATCH THE REMAINING MEMBERS OF OUR TEAM FROM THIS BASE MOMENTARILY.

BRIT, IS YOUR TEAM READY TO GO UP AGAINST THIS INVADING FORCE THAT IS MOST CERTAINLY NOT THE FLAXANS?

AFFIRMATIVE.

SEND US IN, ROBOT.

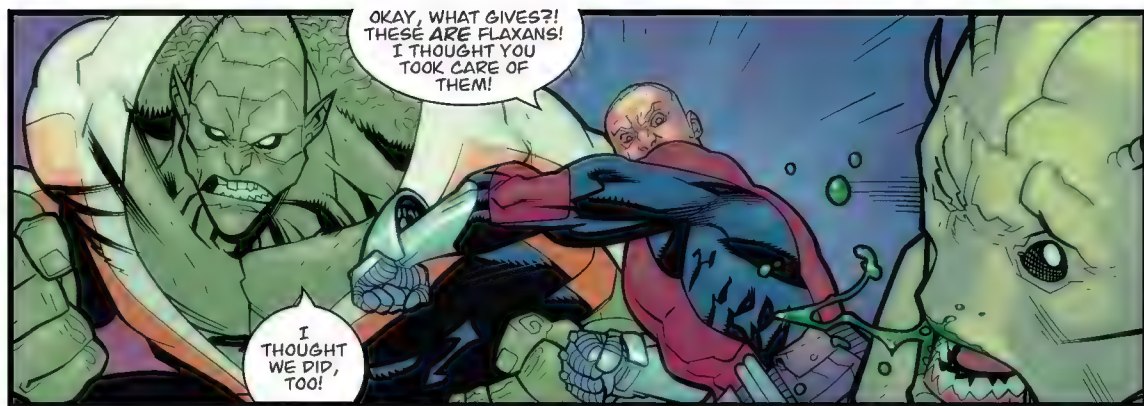




WE NOW  
JOIN SHEER  
PANDEMONIUM  
ALREADY IN  
PROGRESS!

WOW!





OKAY, WHAT GIVES?!  
THESE ARE FLAXANS!  
I THOUGHT YOU  
TOOK CARE OF  
THEM!

I  
THOUGHT  
WE DID,  
TOO!



NO!

IT  
CAN'T BE!  
IT CAN'T  
BE THE  
FLAXANS! I  
REFUSE  
TO ACCEPT  
THAT!

NOT  
AFTER  
WHAT WE  
LIVED  
THROUGH!



IF IT SHOOTS  
LIKE A FLAXAN  
AND TAKES A  
KICK LIKE A  
FLAXAN...



MAYBE IT'S FLAXANS  
FROM A DIFFERENT  
REALITY THAN THE  
ONE WE VISITED--  
COULD BE  
ANYTHING.

LESS  
ARGUING--  
MORE  
FIGHTING!  
LIVES ARE AT  
STAKE!

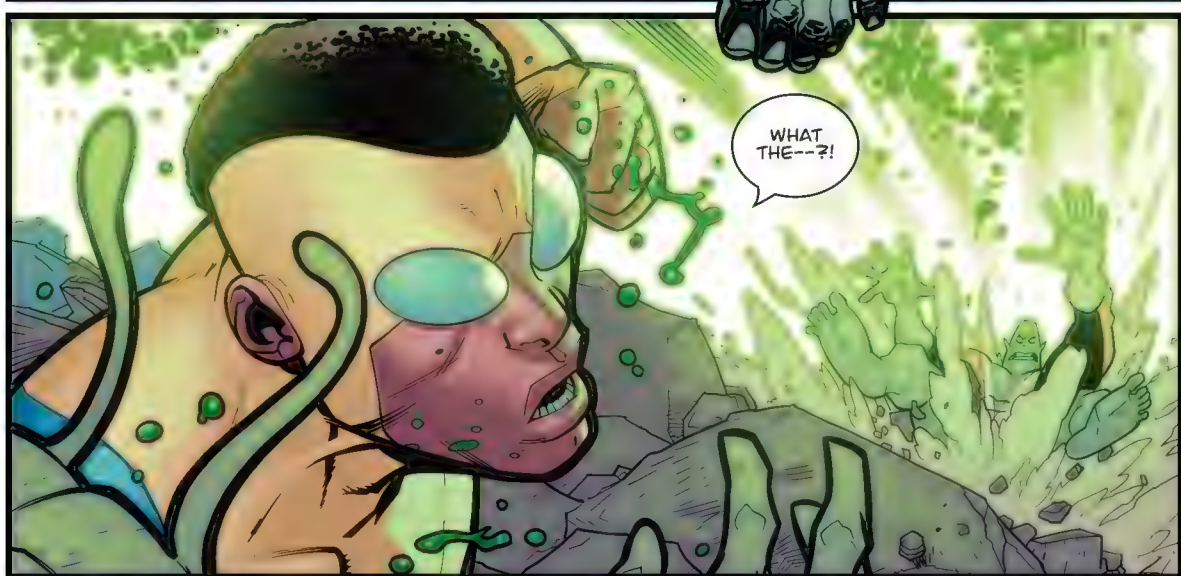




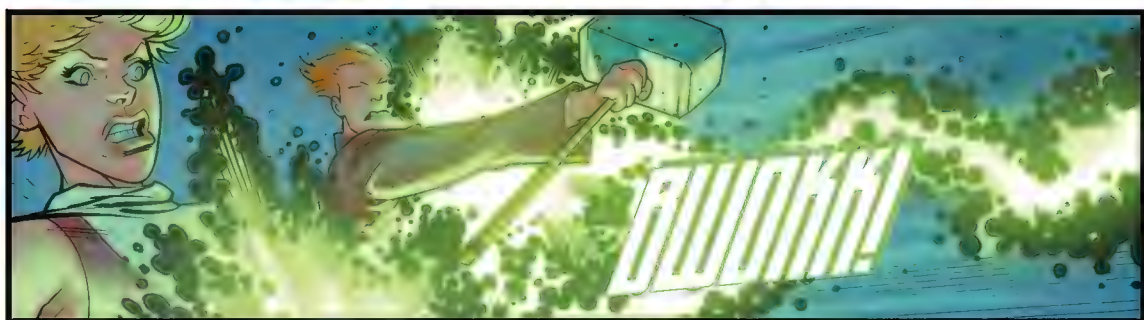














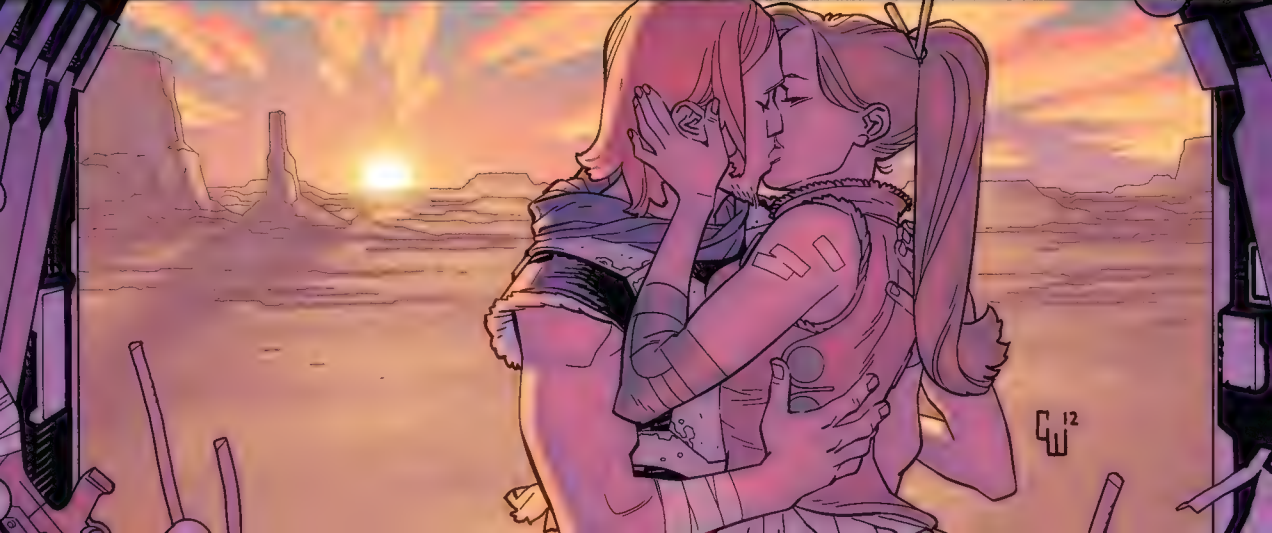




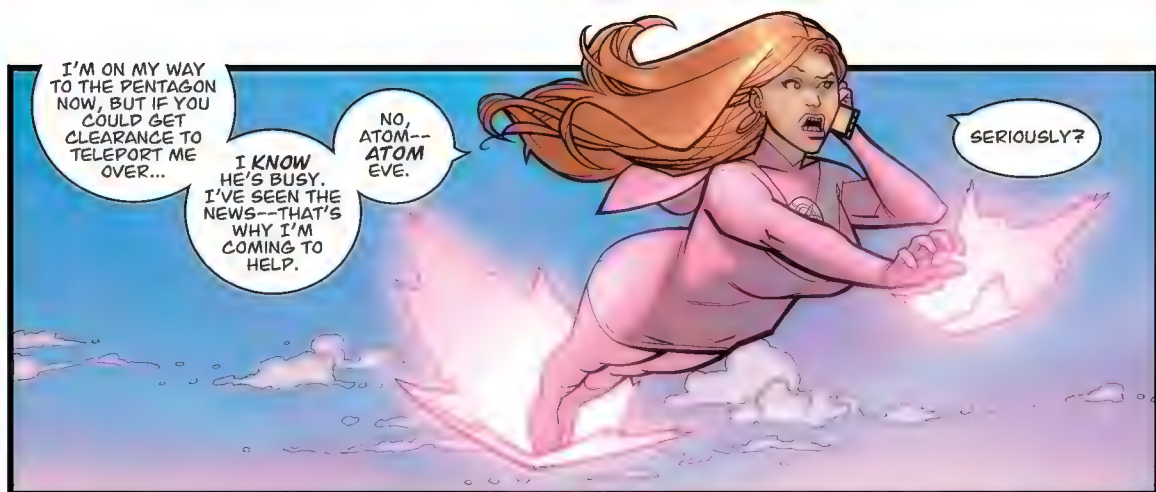




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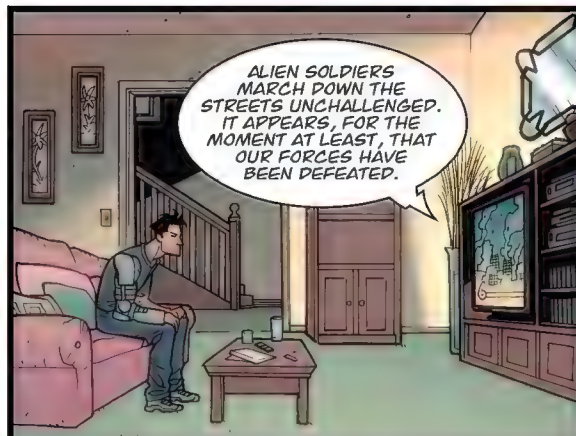


I'M ON MY WAY TO THE PENTAGON NOW, BUT IF YOU COULD GET CLEARANCE TO TELEPORT ME OVER...

I KNOW HE'S BUSY. I'VE SEEN THE NEWS--THAT'S WHY I'M COMING TO HELP.

NO, ATOM--  
ATOM EVE.

SERIOUSLY?



ALIEN SOLDIERS MARCH DOWN THE STREETS UNCHALLENGED. IT APPEARS, FOR THE MOMENT AT LEAST, THAT OUR FORCES HAVE BEEN DEFEATED.

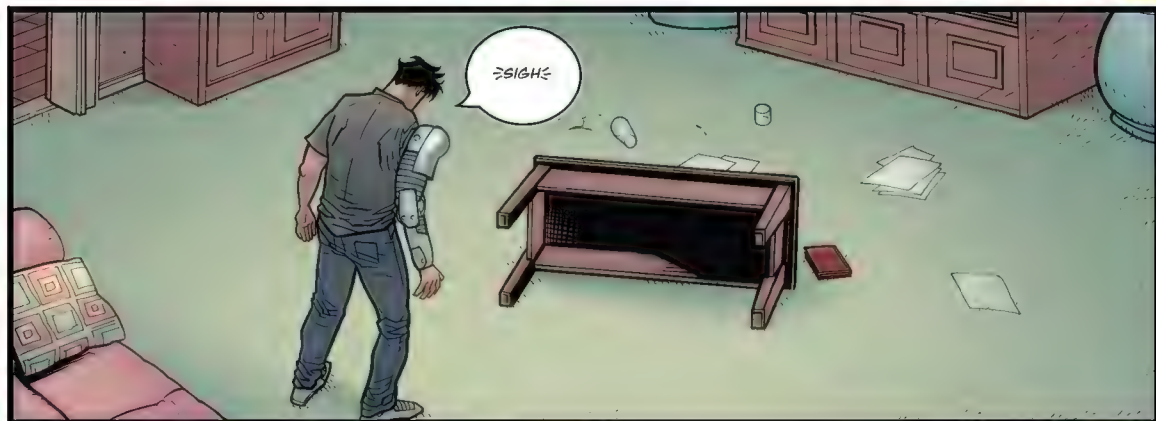


IF THERE'S ANYONE OUT THERE WITH POWERS ABLE TO LEND A HAND, THE PEOPLE OF LONDON COULD CERTAINLY USE YOUR HELP.



DAMN IT!

WRAMMM!

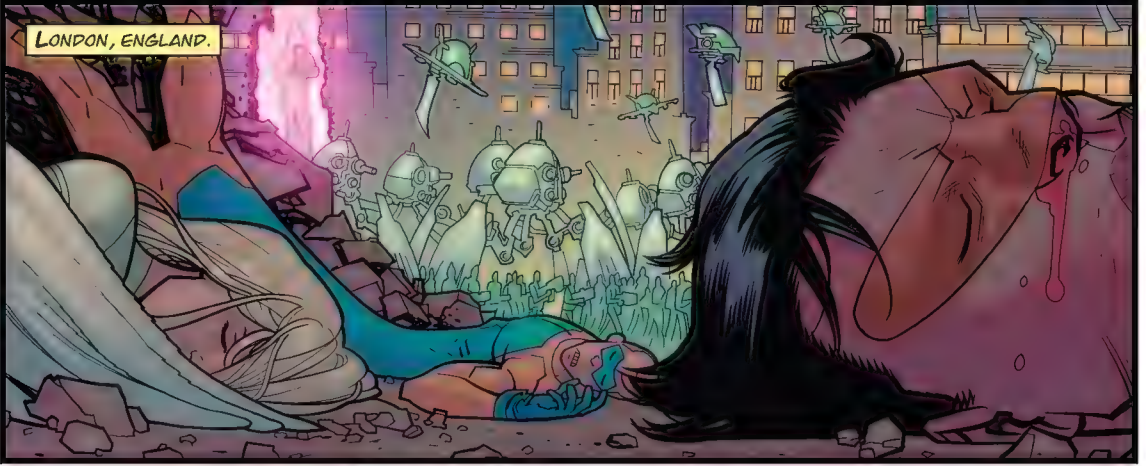


SIGH













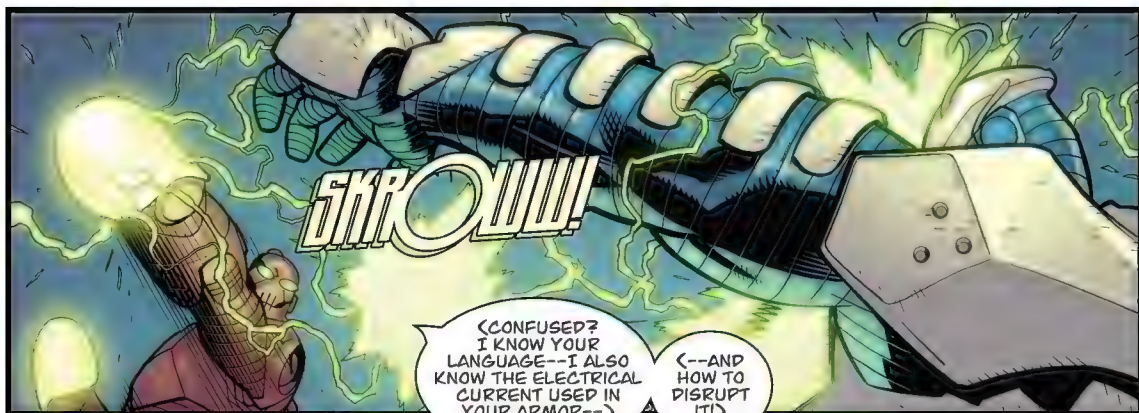
FOR THE  
RECORD, I  
WAS GOING TO  
BREAK FREE  
ON MY OWN!

I BELIEVE  
YOU--NOW  
HELP MY  
DRONES  
WITH THE  
SOLDIERS--

THIS  
ONE IS  
MINE!

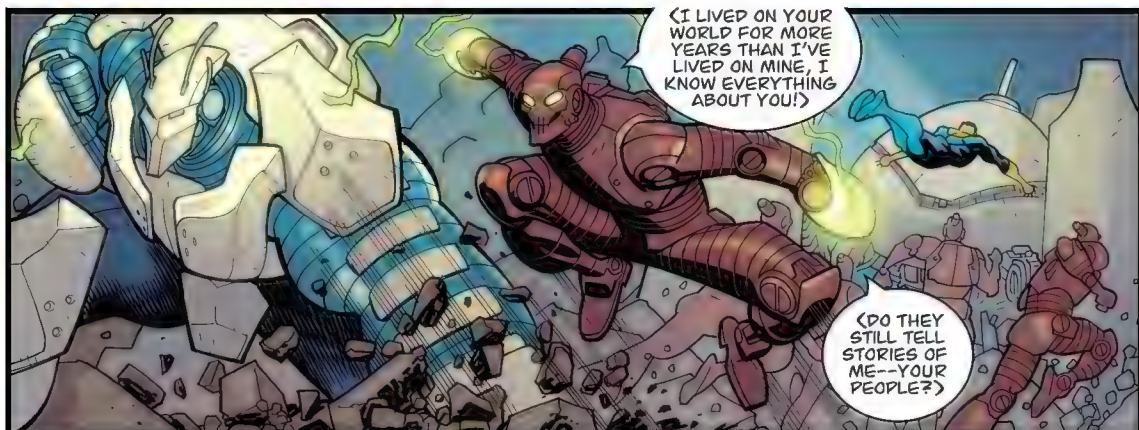
THOOOM!





(CONFUSED?  
I KNOW YOUR  
LANGUAGE--I ALSO  
KNOW THE ELECTRICAL  
CURRENT USED IN  
YOUR ARMOR--)

(--AND  
HOW TO  
DISRUPT  
IT!)



(I LIVED ON YOUR  
WORLD FOR MORE  
YEARS THAN I'VE  
LIVED ON MINE, I  
KNOW EVERYTHING  
ABOUT YOU!)

(DO THEY  
STILL TELL  
STORIES OF  
ME--YOUR  
PEOPLE?)



(I CHANGED THE  
COURSE OF YOUR  
CIVILIZATION, YOU  
KNOW... OR AT  
LEAST--I THOUGHT  
I DID...)

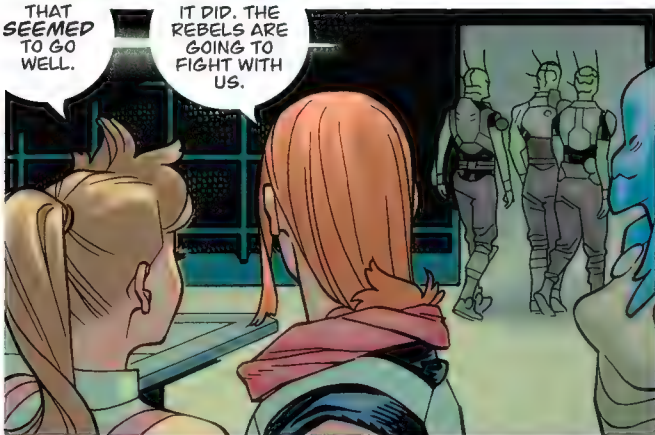
(DID YOU  
TAKE COMMAND  
BY FORCE? FIGHT  
TO RETURN THE  
FLAXANS TO THE  
OLD WAYS--  
THE WARRING  
WAYS?!)



(I WORKED SO  
HARD TO CHANGE  
YOUR PEOPLE! I  
THOUGHT I HAD  
SUCCEEDED!)

(HOW DID  
THINGS GO  
WRONG AFTER  
I LEFT?! HOW  
COULD THIS BE  
HAPPENING?!)









WHAT IS IT? WHAT'S  
WRONG, AMANDA?



THE BELT YOU INVENTED...  
IT'S **WORKING**. IT'S  
ABSORBING THE ENERGY FROM  
MY MONSTER FORM, KEEPING IT  
FROM REVERSING MY AGING.

I'M GETTING OLDER.  
SLOWLY, BUT I AM  
GETTING OLDER.



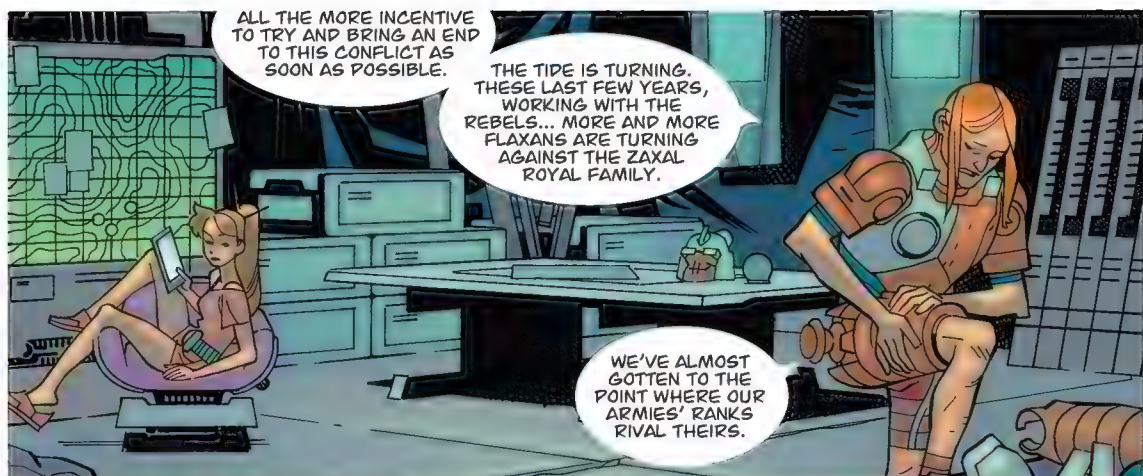
THAT'S GREAT.  
THAT'S WHAT YOU  
WANTED, RIGHT?

YES, BUT...



IF THIS WAR RAGES ON... AND I KNOW  
I'M RIGHT WHEN I SAY THERE'S NO  
END IN SIGHT... IT WILL EVENTUALLY  
GET TO A POINT WHEN I'M **USELESS**  
IN BATTLE.





ALL THE MORE INCENTIVE TO TRY AND BRING AN END TO THIS CONFLICT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

THE TIDE IS TURNING. THESE LAST FEW YEARS, WORKING WITH THE REBELS... MORE AND MORE FLAXANS ARE TURNING AGAINST THE ZAXAL ROYAL FAMILY.

WE'VE ALMOST GOTTEN TO THE POINT WHERE OUR ARMIES' RANKS RIVAL THEIRS.

FANTASTIC, SO... WE'RE ALMOST EVENLY MATCHED?

HOW LONG ARE WE GOING TO BE HERE? THIS WORLD, I... WE'VE ALREADY LIVED HERE FAR LONGER THAN WE EVER LIVED ON EARTH, BUT I STILL FEEL LIKE WE DON'T BELONG.

CAN'T WE ATTACK ONE OF THEIR DIMENSIONAL HUBS, GO BACK FOR JUST A LITTLE BIT?



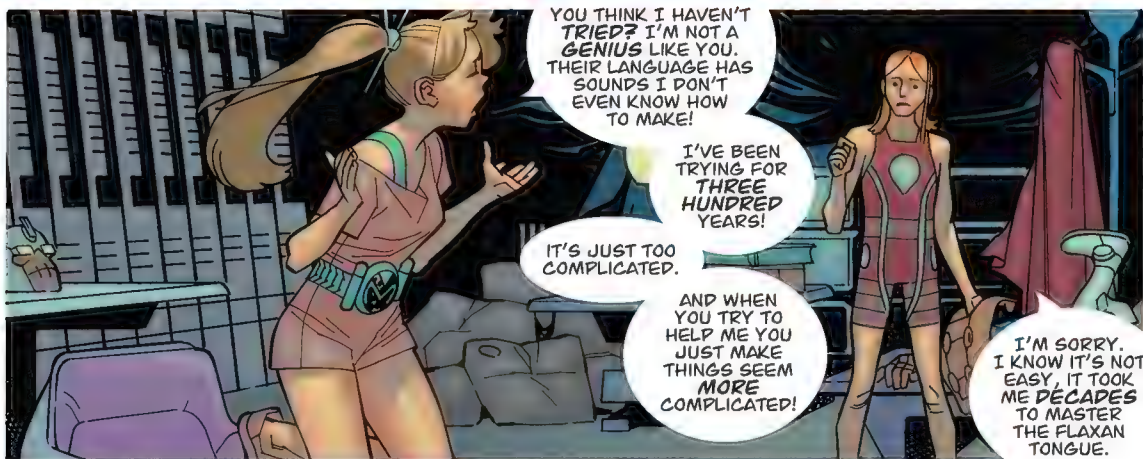
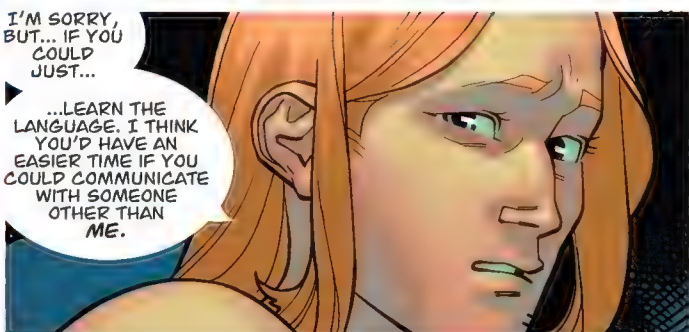
ONLY A MATTER OF MONTHS HAVE PASSED ON EARTH--- IT WILL BE THERE WAITING FOR US WHEN WE'RE READY, I PROMISE.

WERE WE TO GO THERE FOR EVEN A WEEK, WHEN WE RETURNED SO MUCH TIME WOULD HAVE PASSED THAT ALL OUR WORK WOULD BE UNDONE.

WE HAVE TO SEE THIS THROUGH.

I'M SORRY, BUT... IF YOU COULD JUST...

...LEARN THE LANGUAGE. I THINK YOU'D HAVE AN EASIER TIME IF YOU COULD COMMUNICATE WITH SOMEONE OTHER THAN ME.



YOU THINK I HAVEN'T TRIED? I'M NOT A GENIUS LIKE YOU. THEIR LANGUAGE HAS SOUNDS I DON'T EVEN KNOW HOW TO MAKE!

I'VE BEEN TRYING FOR THREE HUNDRED YEARS!

IT'S JUST TOO COMPLICATED.

AND WHEN YOU TRY TO HELP ME YOU JUST MAKE THINGS SEEM MORE COMPLICATED!

I'M SORRY. I KNOW IT'S NOT EASY, IT TOOK ME DECADES TO MASTER THE FLAXAN TONGUE.

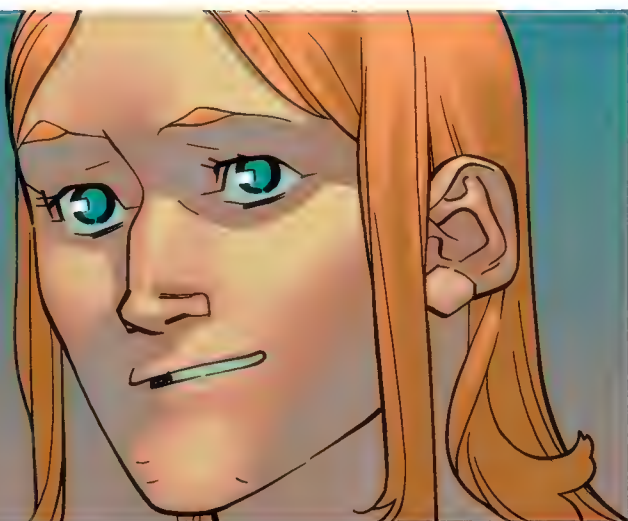


I'M SORRY, I DIDN'T MEAN TO UPSET YOU. I KNOW THIS ISN'T EASY FOR YOU. ALL I CAN SAY IS THAT WHAT WE'RE DOING IS NOTHING LESS THAN SAVING OUR WORLD.

AND WHILE IT WILL MOST DEFINITELY BE THE LONGEST STRETCH OF TIME ANY HUMAN HAS EVER EXPERIENCED, ASIDE FROM MAYBE THE IMMORTAL... IT WILL BE TEMPORARY.

FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH... IF I COULD HAVE CHOSEN ANYONE TO ACCOMPANY ME ON THIS MISSION...

...IT WOULD HAVE BEEN YOU.



WELL, I...



(THE SCOUTING PARTY IS ASSEMBLED, WE'LL LEAVE AS SOON AS YOU'RE READY, SIR.)

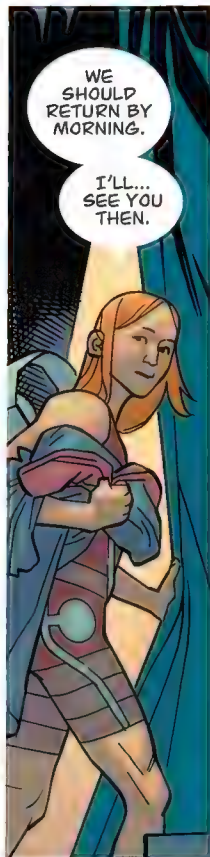


(GOOD. I'LL JOIN YOU IN A MOMENT.)



WE SHOULD RETURN BY MORNING.

I'LL... SEE YOU THEN.

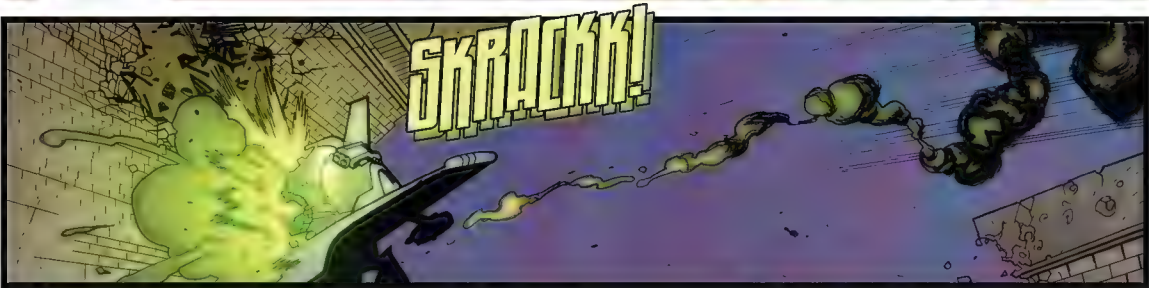
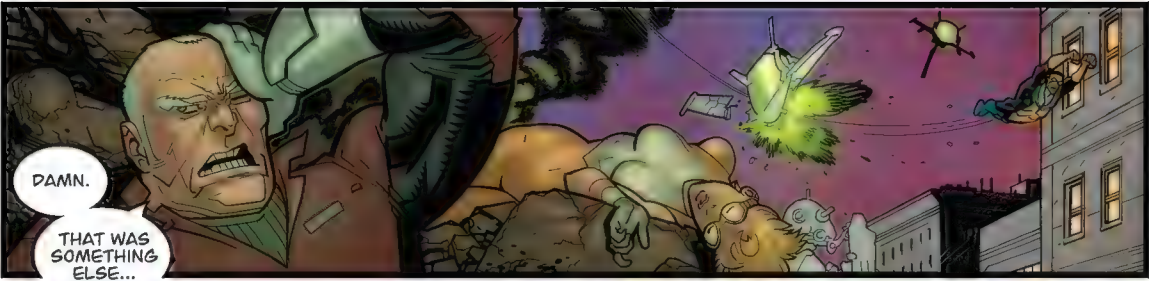


YEAH.

...

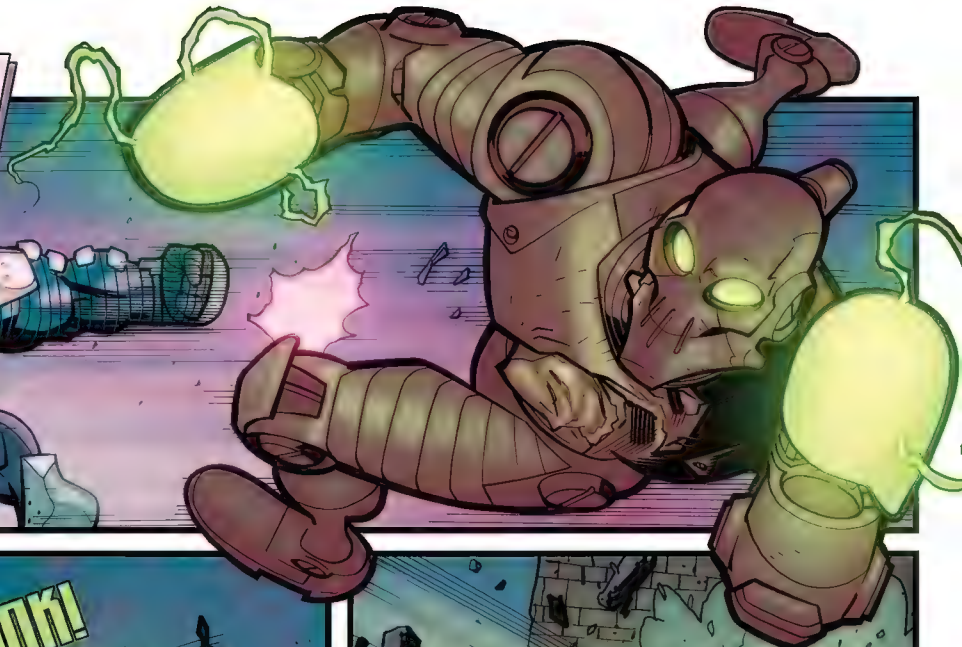
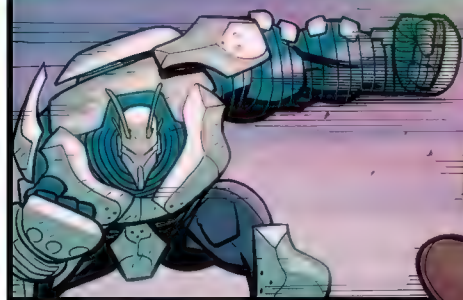




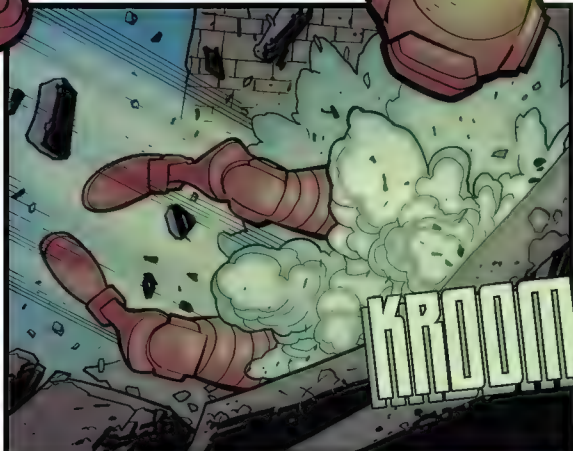




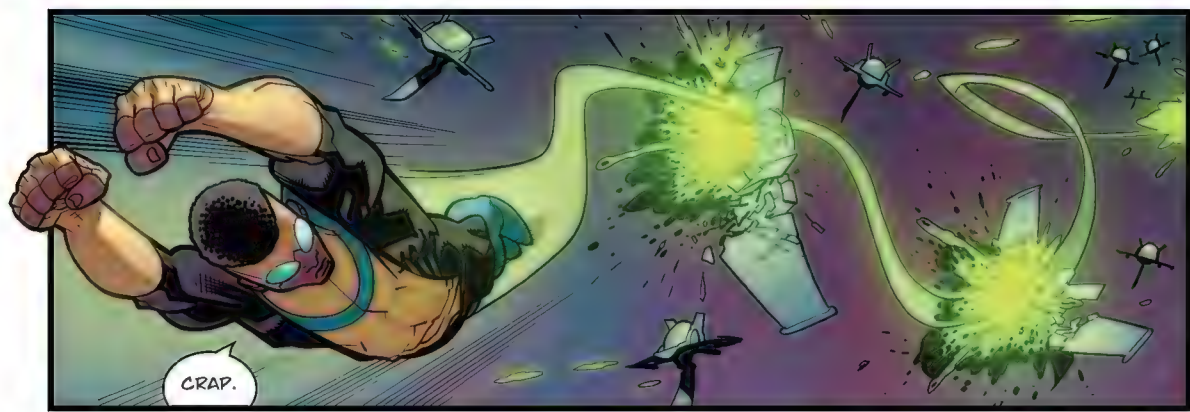
WRAMM!



CHOKI!



KROOM!



CRAP.



ANY IDEAS?

WE NEED TO CONTAIN THEM, DRIVE THEM OUT OF THE CITY CENTER. THIS IS A NEW TACTIC FOR THEM, THEY USUALLY INVADE SPARSELY POPULATED AREAS, EASIER TO ESTABLISH A FOOTHOLD-- BUT LONDON COULD PROVIDE A MUCH STRONGER STAGING GROUND.

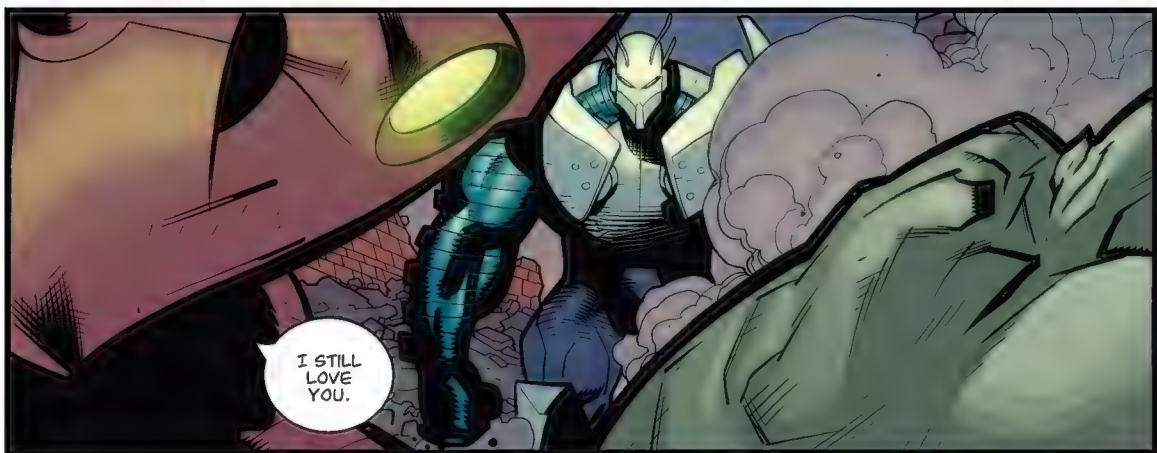
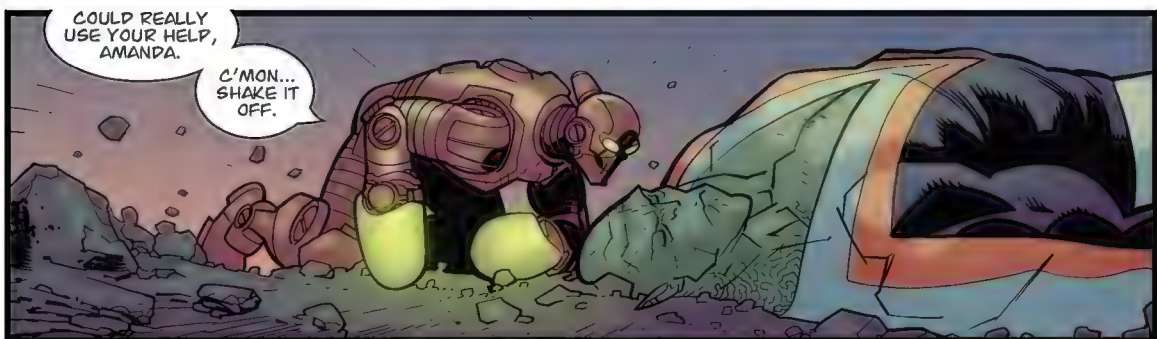
FOR NOW, I NEED YOU TO GET OUR INJURED OUT OF HARM'S WAY. GET THEM TO A ROOFTOP SO OUR PEOPLE CAN SAFELY TELEPORT THEM AWAY.

GO!

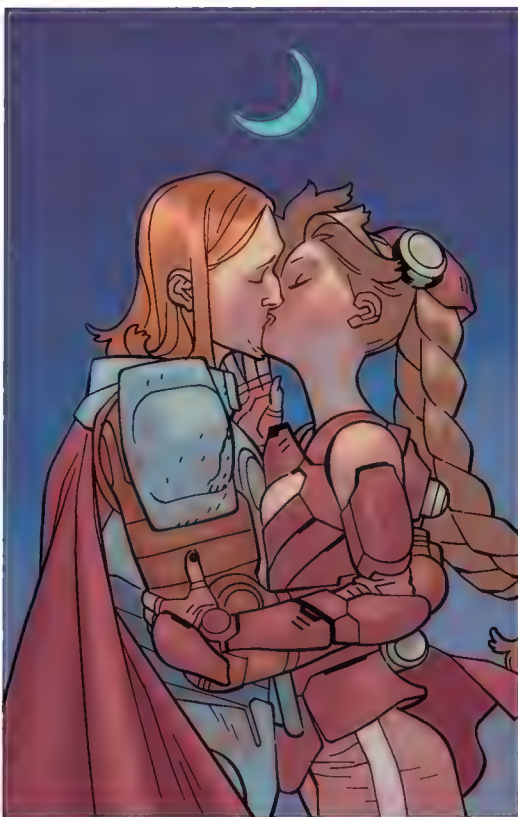
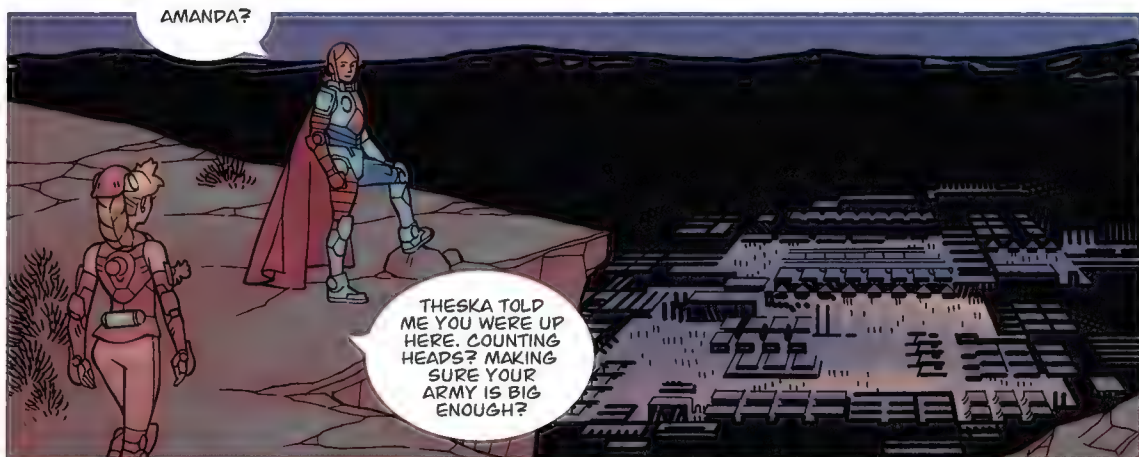




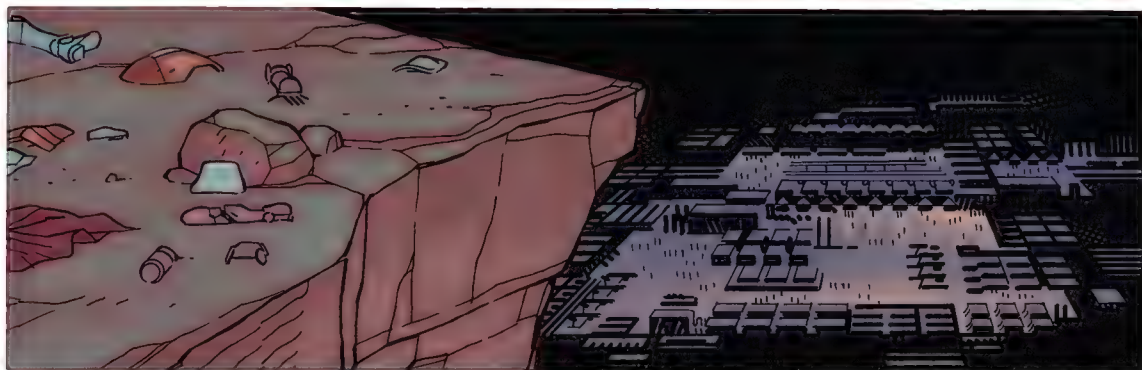
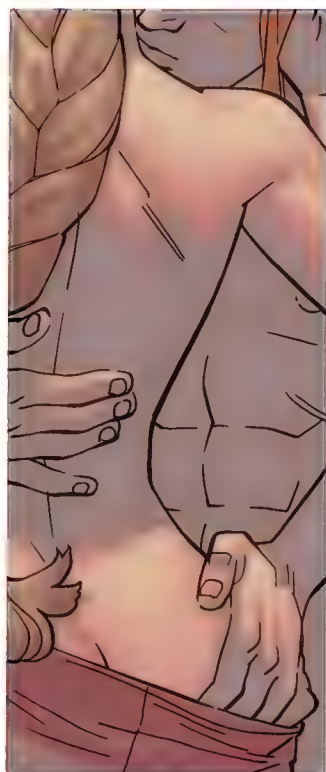
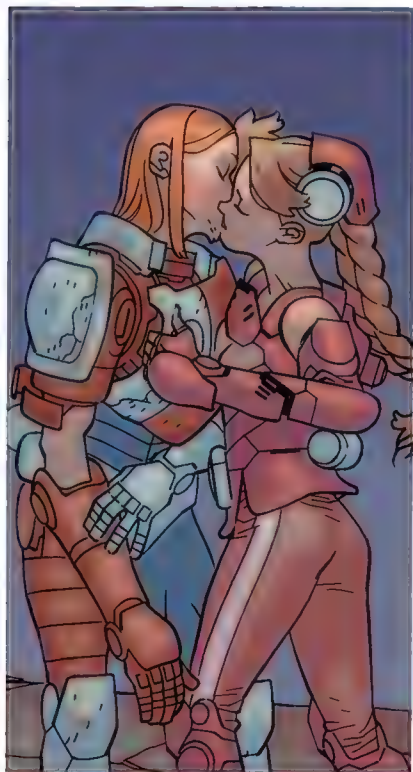
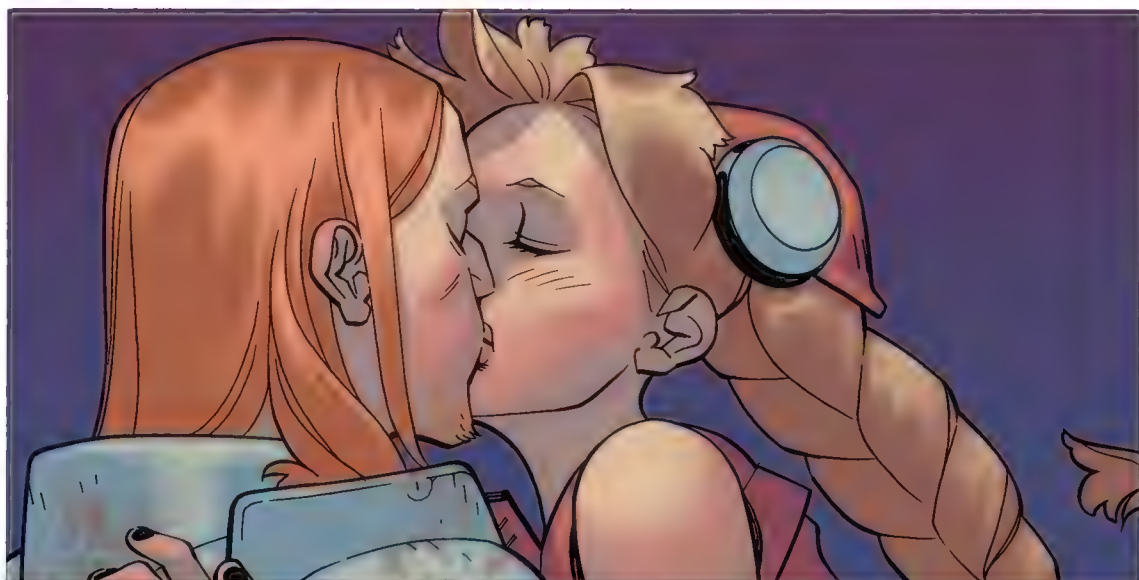




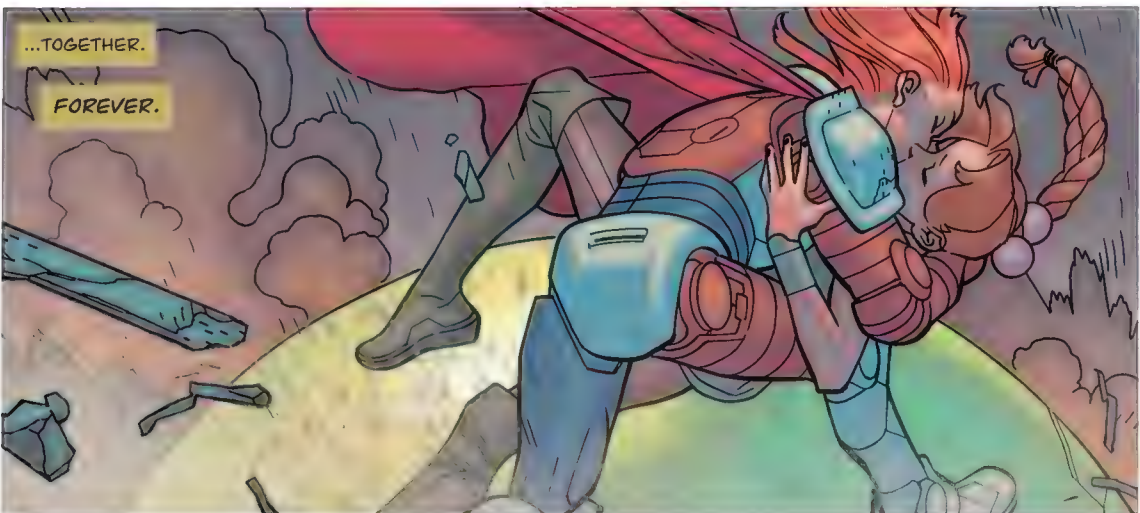
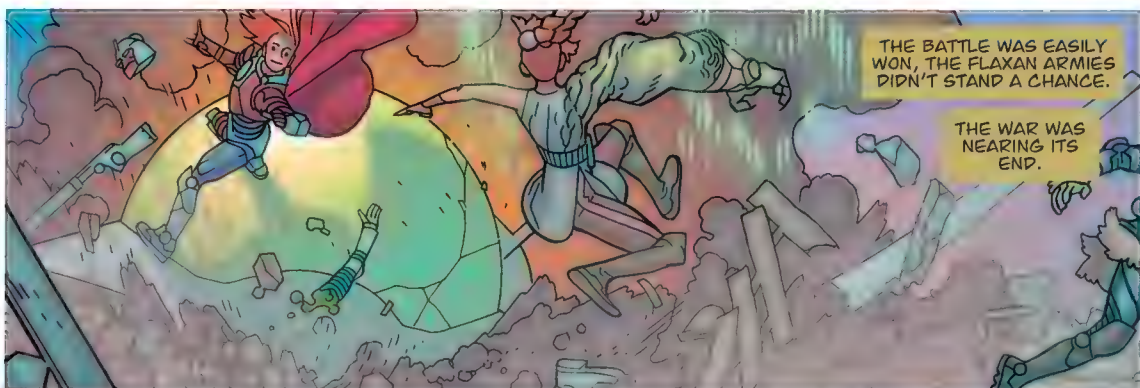










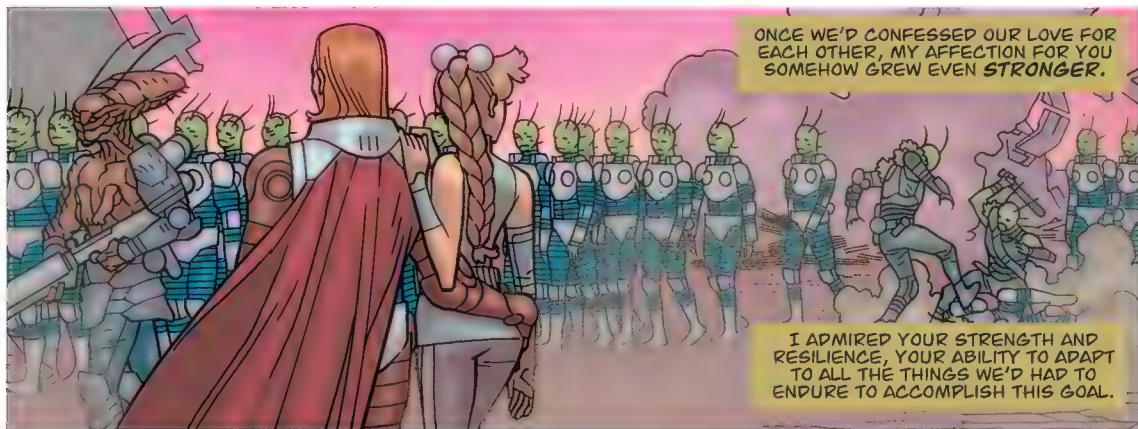






THE WAR  
WAS OVER.

ALL THE SLAVE RACES WERE  
ALLOWED TO RETURN TO THEIR  
HOME DIMENSIONS. MOST  
CHOSE NOT TO, AS THEY'D BEEN  
HERE FOR GENERATIONS.



ONCE WE'D CONFESSED OUR LOVE FOR  
EACH OTHER, MY AFFECTION FOR YOU  
SOMEHOW GREW EVEN **STRONGER**.

I ADMIRERD YOUR STRENGTH AND  
RESILIENCE, YOUR ABILITY TO ADAPT  
TO ALL THE THINGS WE'D HAD TO  
ENDURE TO ACCOMPLISH THIS GOAL.



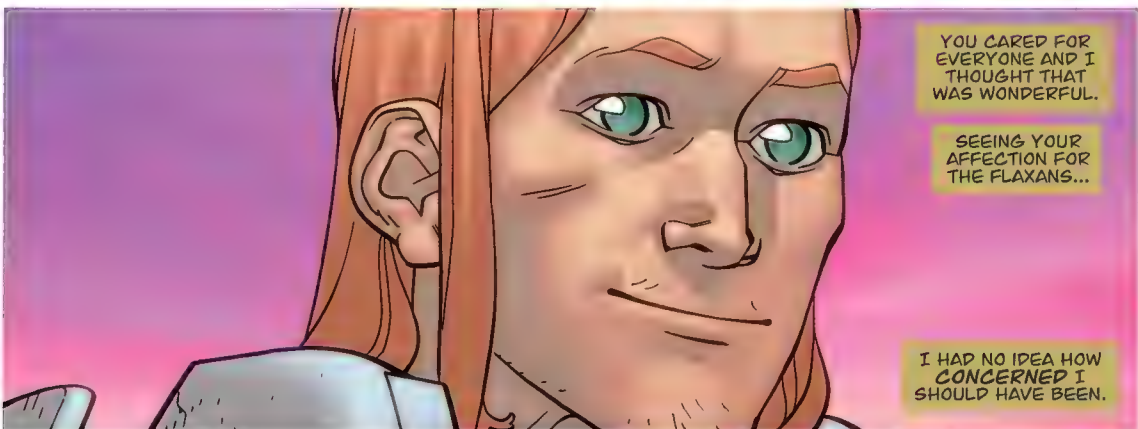
YOUR COMPASSION  
MOVED ME.

YOU CARED FOR  
ALL PEOPLE, EVEN  
OUR ENEMIES.



IT WAS  
EXTRAORDINARY.

I FELT DEEPER  
IN LOVE WITH YOU  
IN EVERY MOMENT.

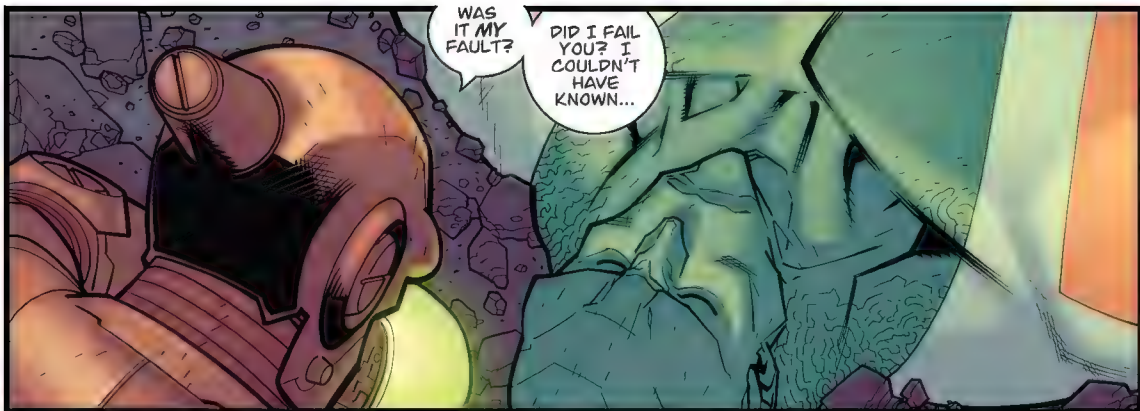


YOU CARED FOR  
EVERYONE AND I  
THOUGHT THAT  
WAS WONDERFUL.

SEEING YOUR  
AFFECTION FOR  
THE FLAXANS...

I HAD NO IDEA HOW  
**CONCERNED** I  
SHOULD HAVE BEEN.





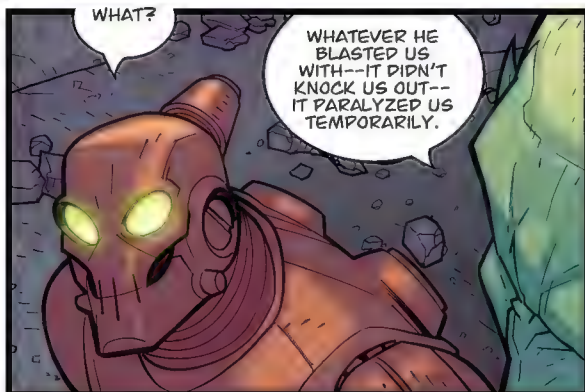




GOOD TIMING.  
I'M STRETCHED  
A LITTLE THIN.  
LOTS OF  
DRONES IN  
ACTION.

MUST  
HAVE GOTTEN  
Distracted.

I WASN'T  
UNCONSCIOUS.



WHAT?

WHATEVER HE  
BLASTED US  
WITH--IT DIDN'T  
KNOCK US OUT--  
IT PARALYZED US  
TEMPORARILY.



I HEARD  
EVERYTHING  
YOU SAID.



AT LONG LAST  
I AM FACE TO  
FACE WITH  
YOU--!

LOOK UPON  
ME, REX ROBOT  
AND AMANDA  
MONSTER GIRL.  
I AM LIVING PROOF  
THAT YOUR WORK  
TO DESTROY MY  
PEOPLE HAS  
FAILED.

THAT'S  
RIGHT... I  
SPEAK YOUR  
LANGUAGE,  
TOO.



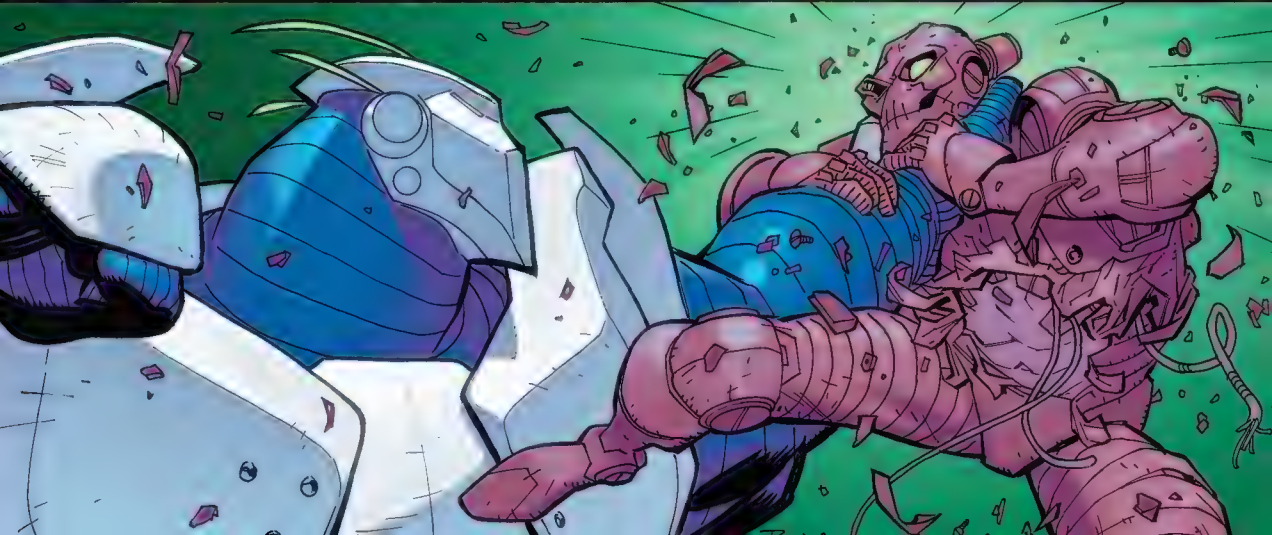




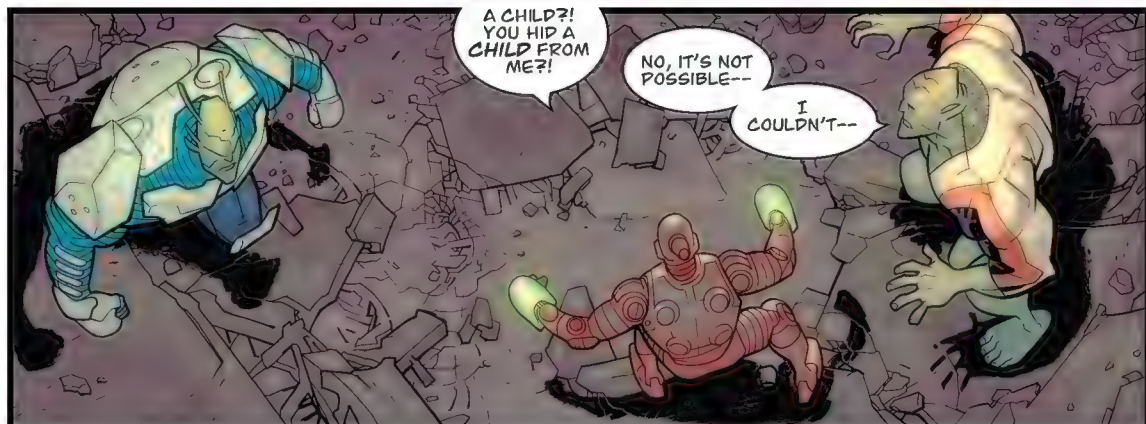




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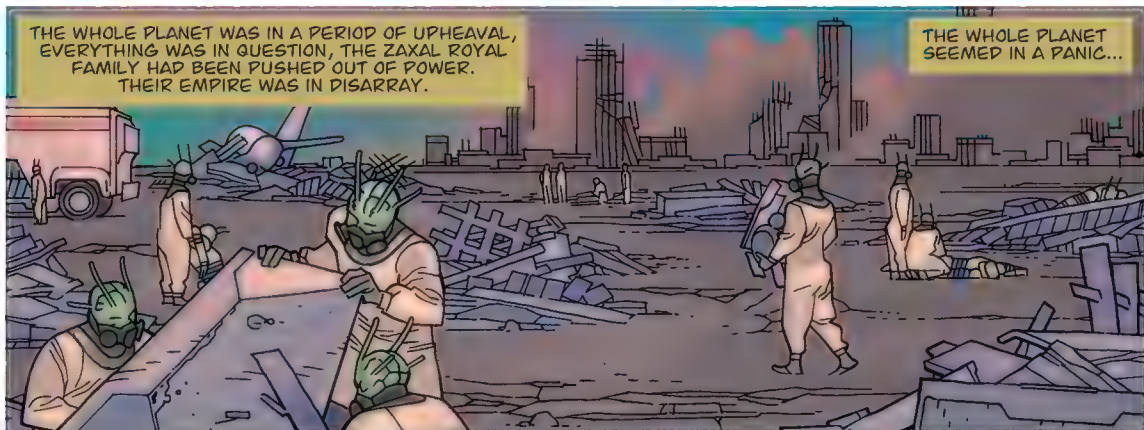






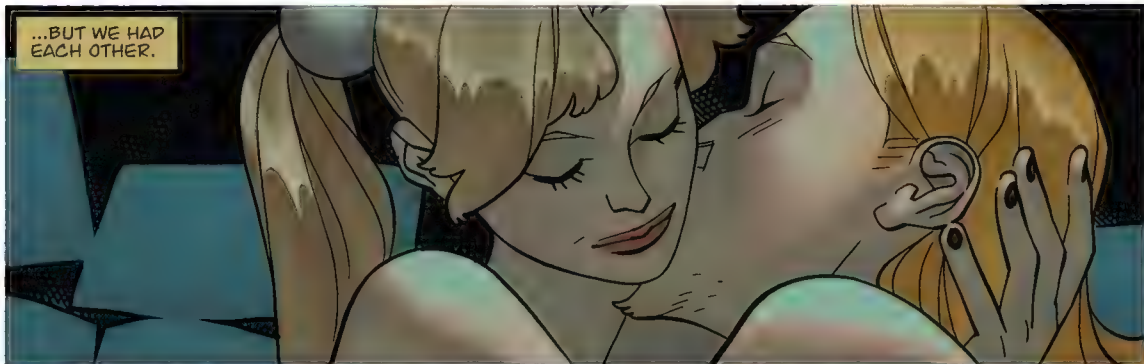
DEAREST AMANDA, I  
REMEMBER THE DAYS  
FOLLOWING THE END  
OF THE GREAT WAR OF  
INDEPENDENCE...

...HOW HAPPY  
WE WERE.

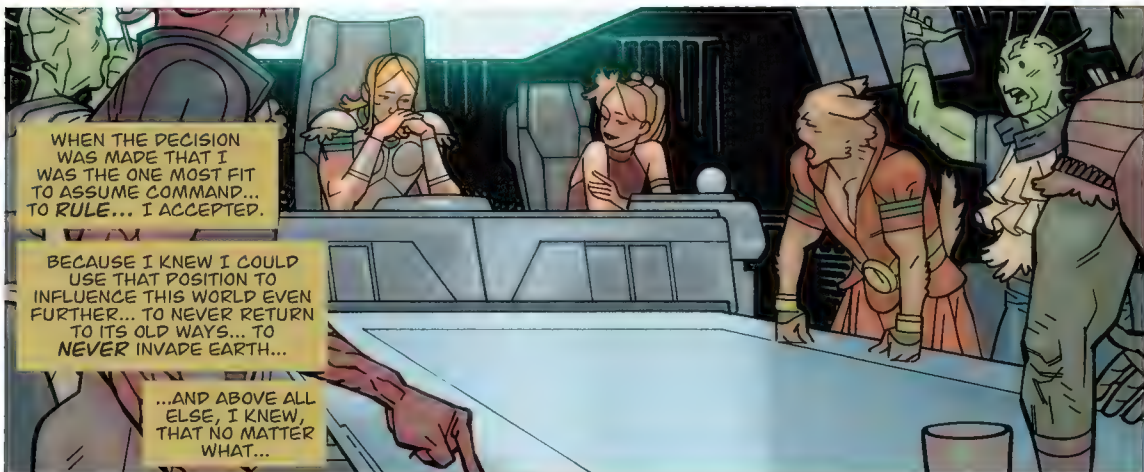


THE WHOLE PLANET WAS IN A PERIOD OF UPHEAVAL,  
EVERYTHING WAS IN QUESTION, THE ZAXAL ROYAL  
FAMILY HAD BEEN PUSHED OUT OF POWER.  
THEIR EMPIRE WAS IN DISARRAY.

THE WHOLE PLANET  
SEEMED IN A PANIC...



...BUT WE HAD  
EACH OTHER.



WHEN THE DECISION  
WAS MADE THAT I  
WAS THE ONE MOST FIT  
TO ASSUME COMMAND...  
TO RULE... I ACCEPTED.

BECAUSE I KNEW I COULD  
USE THAT POSITION TO  
INFLUENCE THIS WORLD EVEN  
FURTHER... TO NEVER RETURN  
TO ITS OLD WAYS... TO  
NEVER INVADE EARTH...

...AND ABOVE ALL  
ELSE, I KNEW  
THAT NO MATTER  
WHAT...





BUT IT HAD MEANT  
SO MUCH TO US,  
AND LIFE HERE  
SEEMED TO HOLD SO  
MUCH PROMISE...

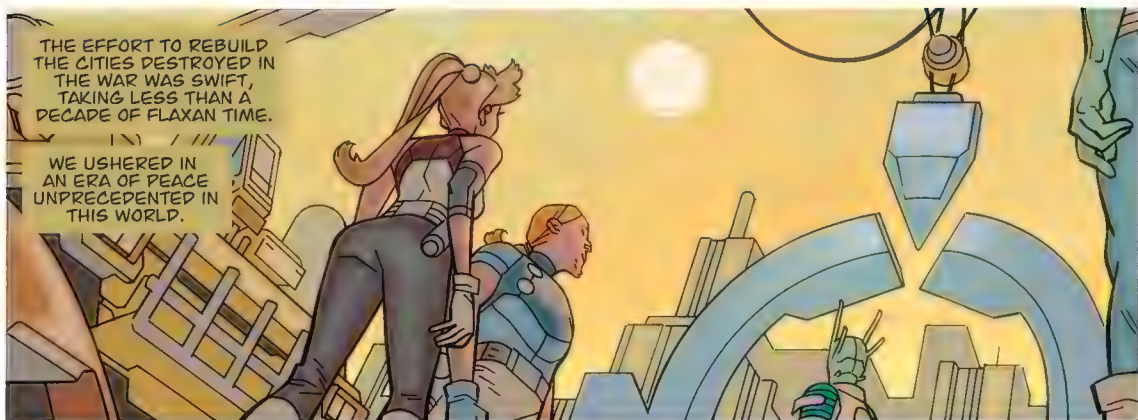
...WE CHOSE  
TO STAY.





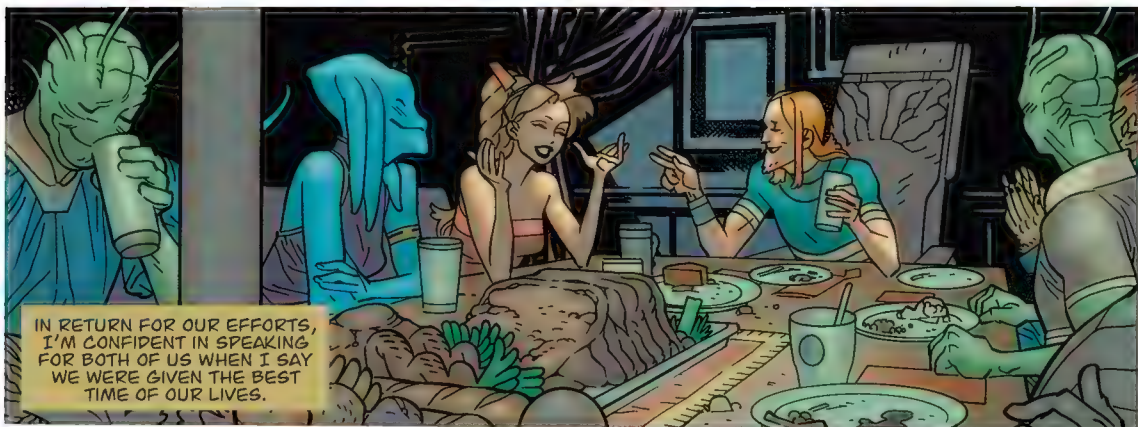
I RECALL HOW QUICKLY ALL  
FLAXAN PEOPLE, EVEN THE  
MILITARY WHO OPPOSED US,  
BEGAN TO RALLY BEHIND US.

THE SUPPORT WAS  
OVERWHELMING.

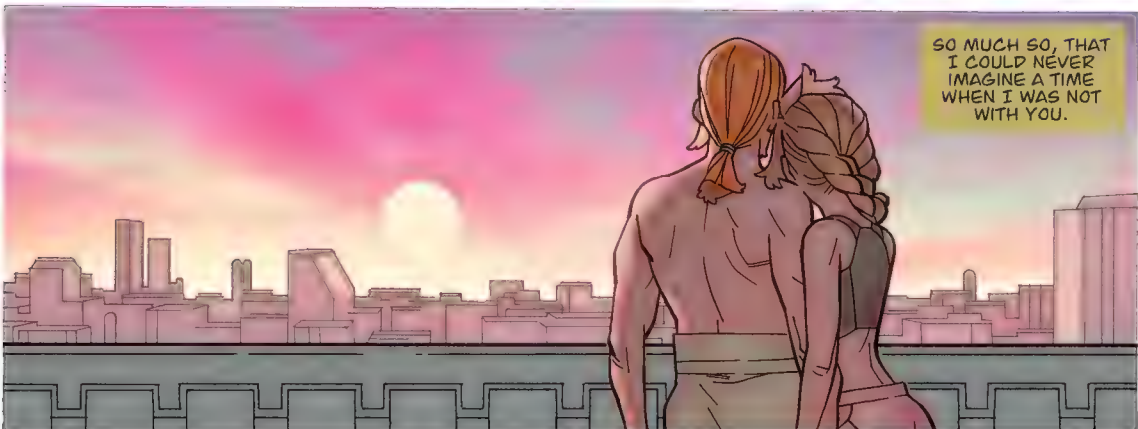


THE EFFORT TO REBUILD  
THE CITIES DESTROYED IN  
THE WAR WAS SWIFT,  
TAKING LESS THAN A  
DECADE OF FLAXAN TIME.

WE USHERED IN  
AN ERA OF PEACE  
UNPRECEDENTED IN  
THIS WORLD.

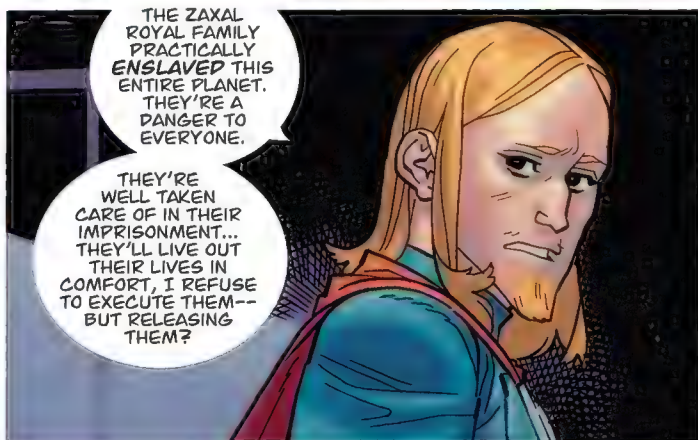
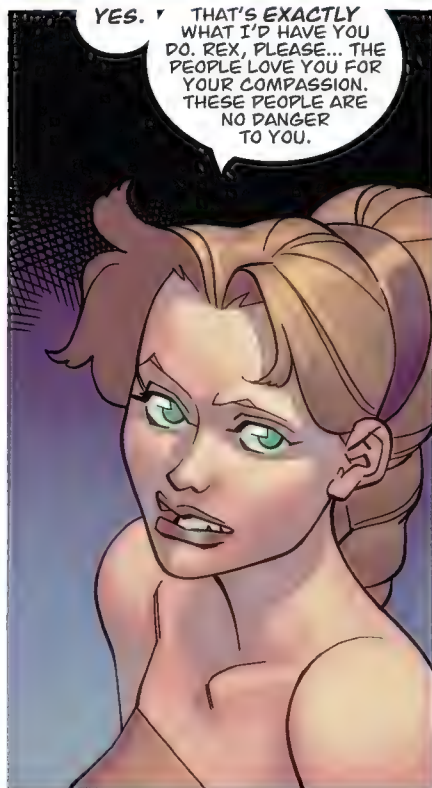
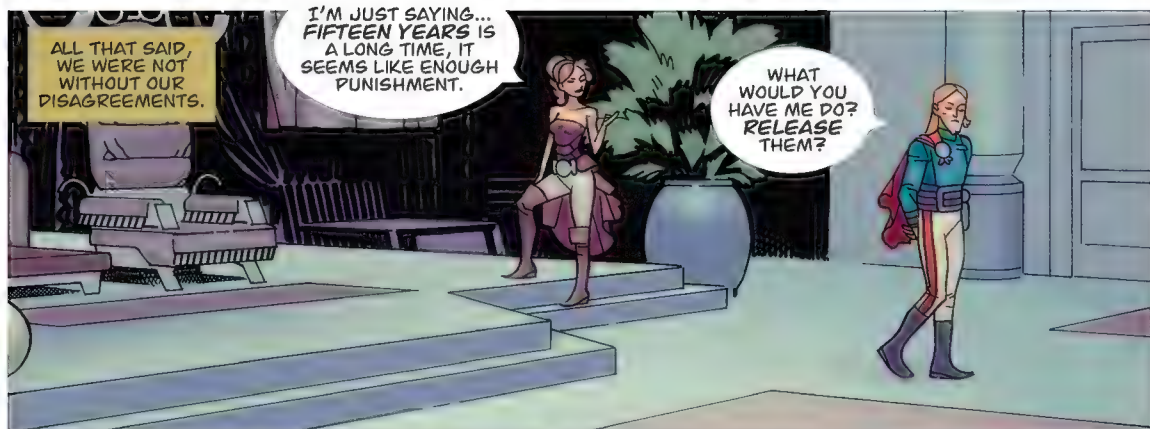


IN RETURN FOR OUR EFFORTS,  
I'M CONFIDENT IN SPEAKING  
FOR BOTH OF US WHEN I SAY  
WE WERE GIVEN THE BEST  
TIME OF OUR LIVES.



SO MUCH SO, THAT  
I COULD NEVER  
IMAGINE A TIME  
WHEN I WAS NOT  
WITH YOU.









OVER THE YEARS,  
I BECAME  
DISTRACTED.

MAN, I SWEAR,  
IF I DIDN'T HAVE  
HUNDREDS OF YEARS  
TO GET USED TO  
THESE THINGS, I  
DON'T KNOW WHAT  
I'D DO.

I MEAN,  
I SPENT  
SO LONG AS A  
SKINNY BEANPOLE...  
I DON'T EVEN... I  
NEVER THOUGHT  
THIS WAS IN MY  
FUTURE.

HM.



I MEAN... YOU HIT THE JACKPOT,  
RIGHT? FALLING IN LOVE WITH  
ME FOR MY MIND, AND  
WINNING PERSONALITY...  
AND GETTING...

...THIS.



THE FINANCIAL MARKETS ARE  
STILL LARGELY DEPENDENT ON  
OFF-WORLD IMPORTS. WE  
HAVEN'T SUFFICIENTLY  
SUPPLEMENTED THE LOSS  
OF THAT IN THE ECONOMY  
IN THE LAST SIXTY  
YEARS.

MEASURES  
WILL NEED  
TO BE TAKEN  
TO PREVENT A  
SUBSTANTIAL  
ECONOMIC  
DOWNTURN...



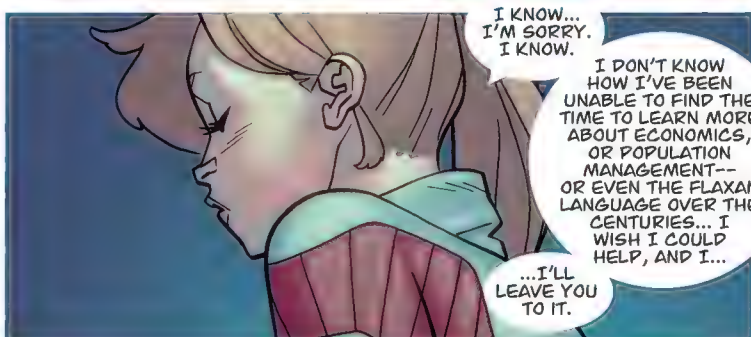
REX?

AGAIN?  
YOU'VE BEEN  
WORKING ON  
THIS FOR  
MONTHS!



I KNOW, AMANDA, I'M SORRY.  
AS RECONSTRUCTION AND  
IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS  
WORLDWIDE SLOW DOWN,  
WE'RE SEEING A  
REAL PROBLEM  
EMERGE.

MAINTAINING OUR  
NEW CITIES IS NOT  
PROVIDING ENOUGH  
WORK FOR THE  
BOOMING POPULATION  
IN PEACE TIME. IT'S  
A REAL--



I KNOW...  
I'M SORRY.  
I KNOW.

I DON'T KNOW  
HOW I'VE BEEN  
UNABLE TO FIND THE  
TIME TO LEARN MORE  
ABOUT ECONOMICS,  
OR POPULATION  
MANAGEMENT--  
OR EVEN THE FLAXAN  
LANGUAGE OVER THE  
CENTURIES... I  
WISH I COULD  
HELP, AND I...

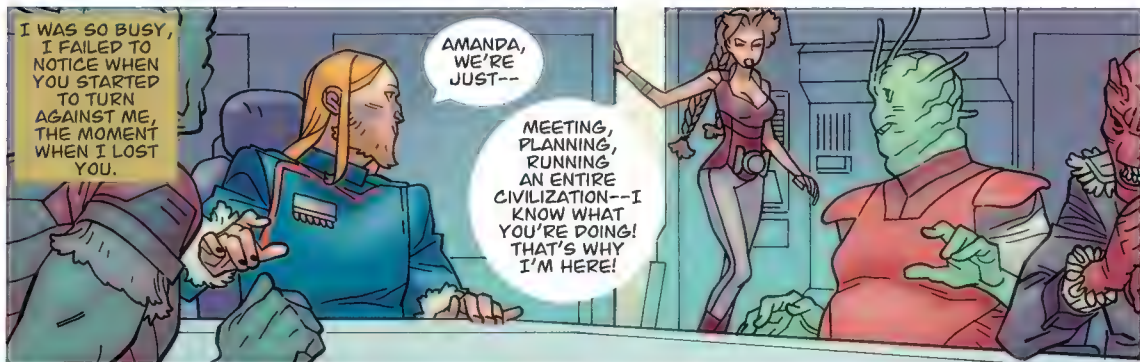
...I'LL  
LEAVE YOU  
TO IT.



THERE WAS A LOT GOING  
ON AND I THOUGHT WE  
HAD ALL THE TIME IN  
THE WORLD.

I REALIZE NOW  
I SHOULD HAVE  
MADE MORE  
TIME FOR YOU.

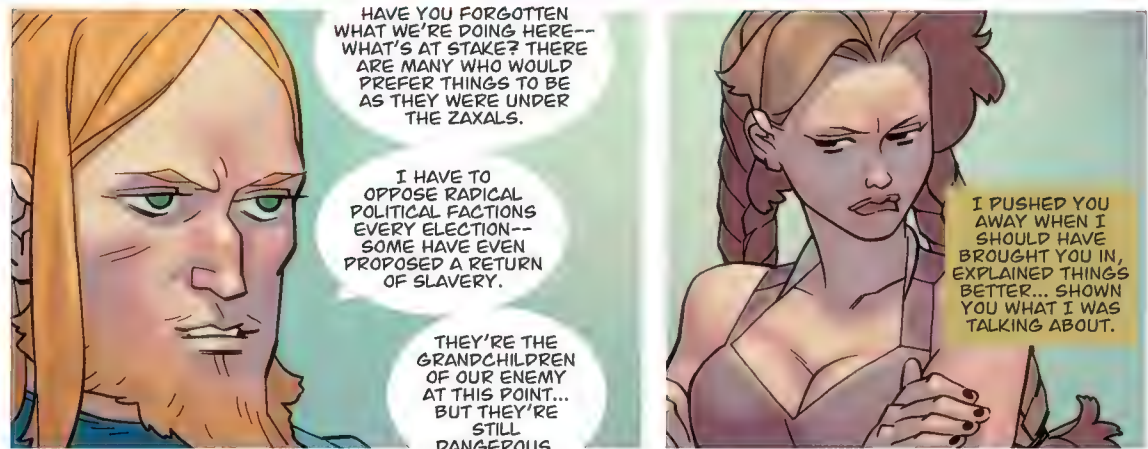
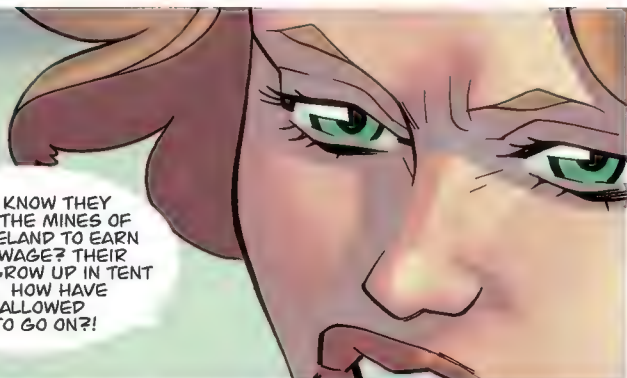




WHY DID YOU NEVER TELL ME ABOUT THE ZAXAL WORK CLASSIFICATION ACT?! I KNOW, I DON'T KNOW THE LANGUAGE, I'VE TRIED TO LEARN THE LANGUAGE... BUT THAT DOESN'T GIVE YOU THE RIGHT TO KEEP THINGS FROM ME!

DESCENDANTS OF THE ZAXAL ROYAL FAMILY AND THEIR ALLIES ARE RESTRICTED ACCESS TO CITY CENTERS?! HOW IS THAT REMOTELY HUMANE?!

DO YOU KNOW THEY WORK IN THE MINES OF THE WASTELAND TO EARN A LIVING WAGE? THEIR CHILDREN GROW UP IN TENT CITIES! HOW HAVE YOU ALLOWED THIS TO GO ON?!





I TAKE RESPONSIBILITY  
FOR WHAT CAME NEXT.  
I GAVE YOU NO CHOICE.

YOU WERE ONLY DOING WHAT  
YOU THOUGHT WAS RIGHT...  
SAVING PEOPLE... HELPING THE  
WEAK... LIKE WE'D DONE SO  
LONG AGO, ON EARTH.

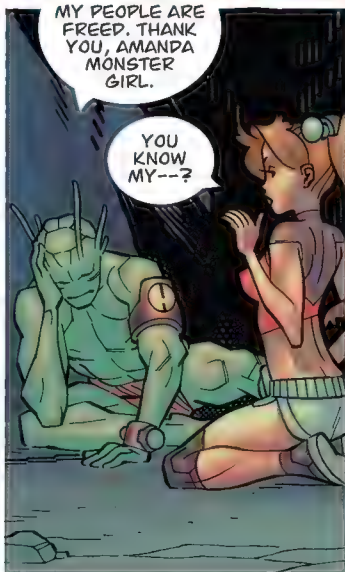
IF YOU  
WANT TO BEAT  
SOMEONE--

--BEAT  
ME!



MY PEOPLE ARE  
FREED. THANK  
YOU, AMANDA  
MONSTER  
GIRL.

YOU  
KNOW  
MY--?



YOUR LANGUAGE WAS USED  
AS CODE IN THE WAR. MY  
PEOPLE CRACKED IT AND  
WE'VE TAUGHT OUR  
CHILDREN FOR  
GENERATIONS.

WE USE IT  
IN THE MINES  
SO THE  
BOSSES WON'T  
UNDERSTAND  
US.



WELL, YOU  
WON'T HAVE  
TO WORRY  
ABOUT THAT  
ANYMORE.

I  
PROMISE.





YOU MADE THEM SECOND CLASS CITIZENS, REX! PEOPLE ARE PUNISHED FOR GIVING THEM WORK-- THEY CAN'T FEED THEIR YOUNG!

THE MINES WERE THEIR ONLY MEANS OF SUPPORTING THEMSELVES-- AND THE BOSSES KNEW THAT. THEY WERE ESSENTIALLY SLAVES!

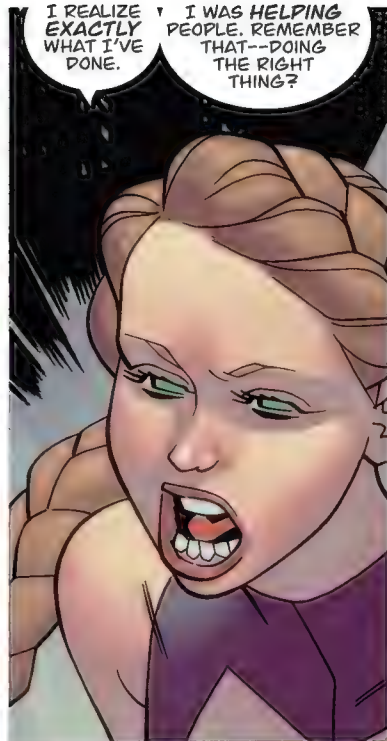


YOU DON'T EVEN REALIZE WHAT YOU'VE DONE?



I REALIZE EXACTLY WHAT I'VE DONE.

I WAS HELPING PEOPLE. REMEMBER THAT--DOING THE RIGHT THING?



YOU UNDERMINED MY AUTHORITY!

DO YOU NOT SEE WHAT A DELICATE HOLD I HAVE ON THESE PEOPLE?! ALL OF THIS COULD COME CRASHING DOWN AROUND US AT ANY MINUTE!

IT'S MY RESPONSIBILITY TO HOLD IT ALL TOGETHER! MINE! THAT WEIGHT RESTS ON MY SHOULDERS.

AND YOU ACTUALLY THINK YOU WERE HELPING?!

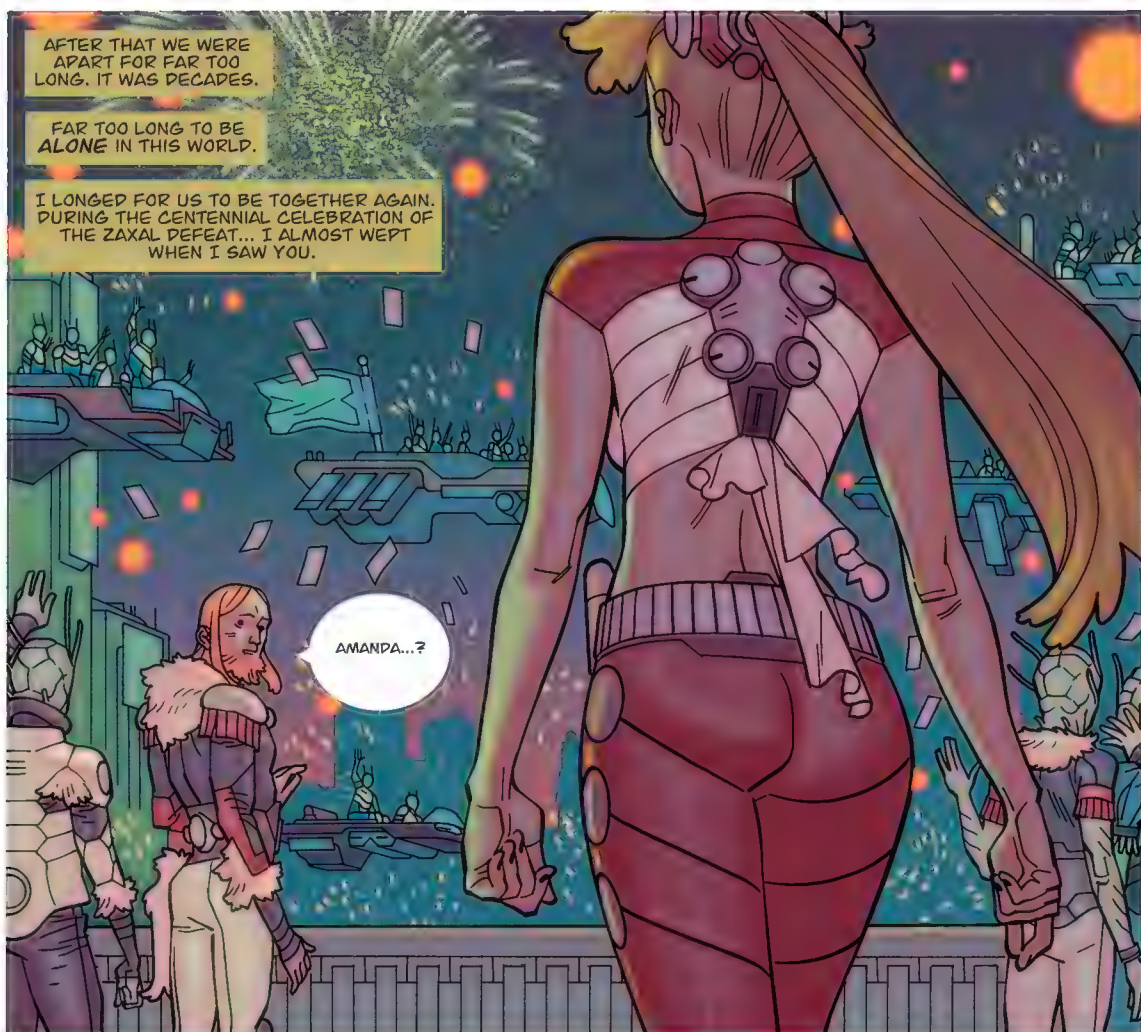


GET OUT OF MY SIGHT.

I AM SORRY THAT IT HAS TAKEN ME THIS LONG TO ADMIT THAT I WAS WRONG THAT DAY.





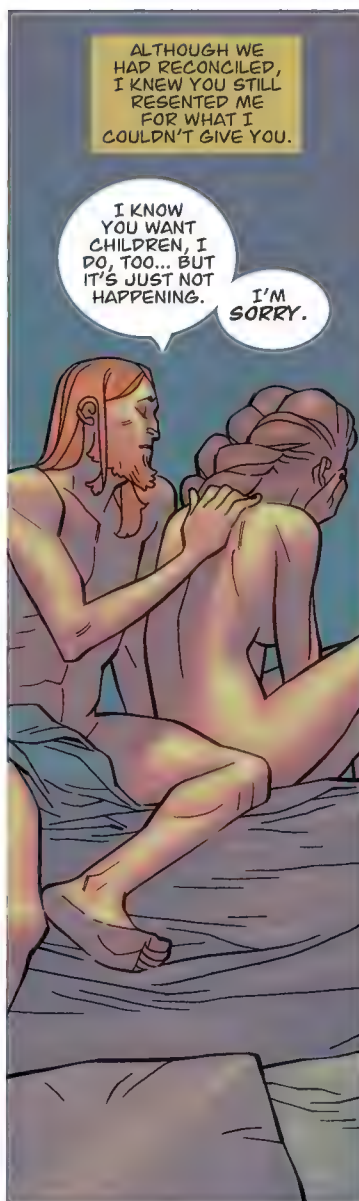






DURING YOUR TIME AWAY, I NEVER KNEW WHERE YOU'D GONE---BUT NOW, IT'S CLEAR TO ME, YOU WERE WITH THE ZAXAL REFUGEES.

THEY'RE JUST **ADORABLE**. YOUR FATHER WOULD BE SO PROUD.



ALTHOUGH WE HAD RECONCILED, I KNEW YOU STILL RESENTED ME FOR WHAT I COULDN'T GIVE YOU.

I KNOW YOU WANT CHILDREN, I DO, TOO... BUT IT'S JUST NOT HAPPENING.

I'M SORRY.



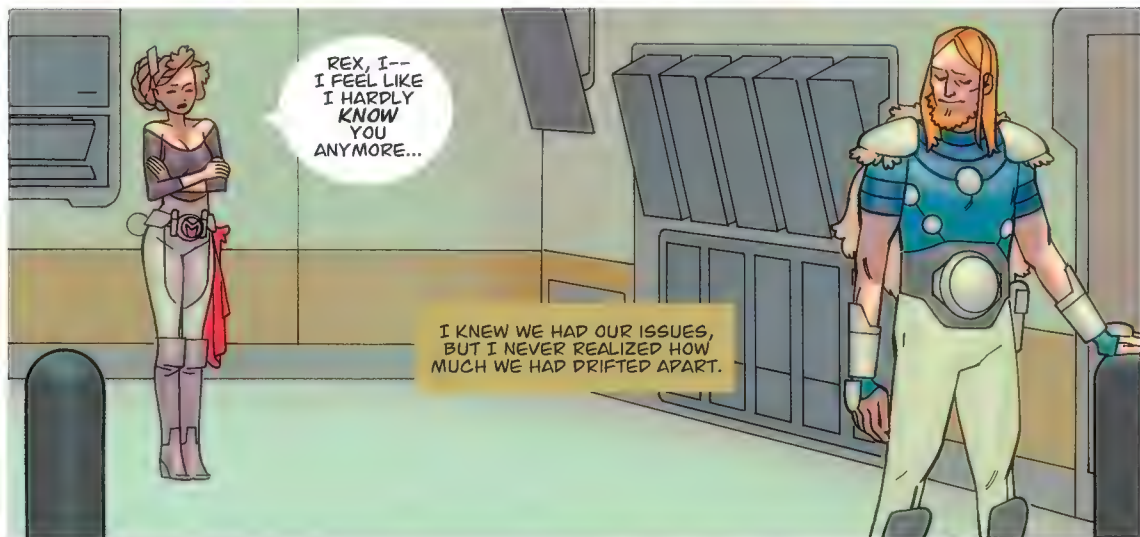
I'M WILLING TO ADMIT THERE MAY HAVE BEEN OTHER THINGS THAT DROVE A WEDGE BETWEEN US.

DON'T BE SO **NAIVE!** THAT WOULD NEVER WORK! IT WILL ONLY LEAD TO **MORE** PROBLEMS!

I KNOW WHAT I'M DOING! WHY DO YOU CONTINUE TO QUESTION ME?!

BECAUSE PEOPLE ARE **STARVING** AND **DYING** OUT THERE! BECAUSE YOUR WAY OF DOING THINGS ISN'T WORKING! THERE'S **PEACE**, **YES**---BUT OUR **RESOURCES** ARE LOW AND YOU DON'T SEEM TO **CARE!**

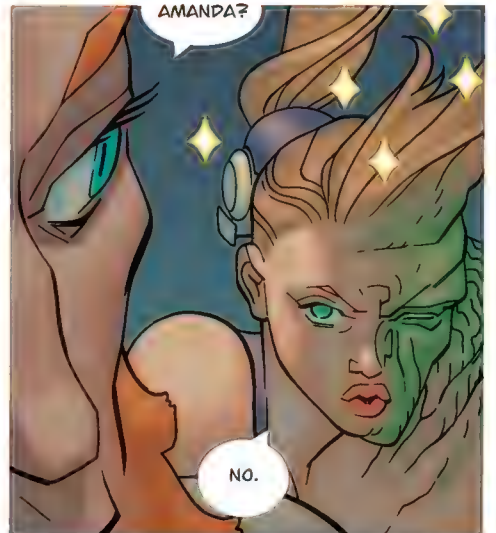
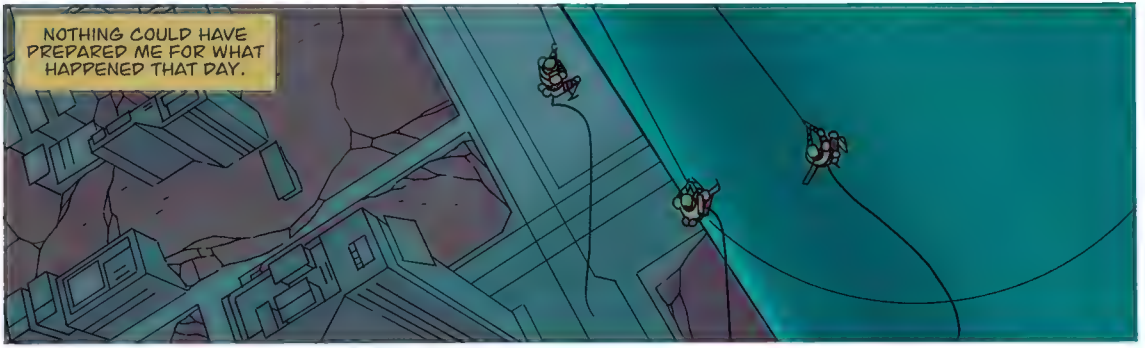
THE ZAXAL ROYAL FAMILY WENT ABOUT THINGS THE WRONG WAY, BUT THEY KNEW WE NEEDED **RESOURCES** FROM OTHER WORLDS TO SUSTAIN THIS **POPULATION!** WE DON'T HAVE TO GO TO WAR FOR IT---BUT THOSE **PORTALS** NEED TO BE USED! YOU ARE **LOSING** THE PEOPLE.



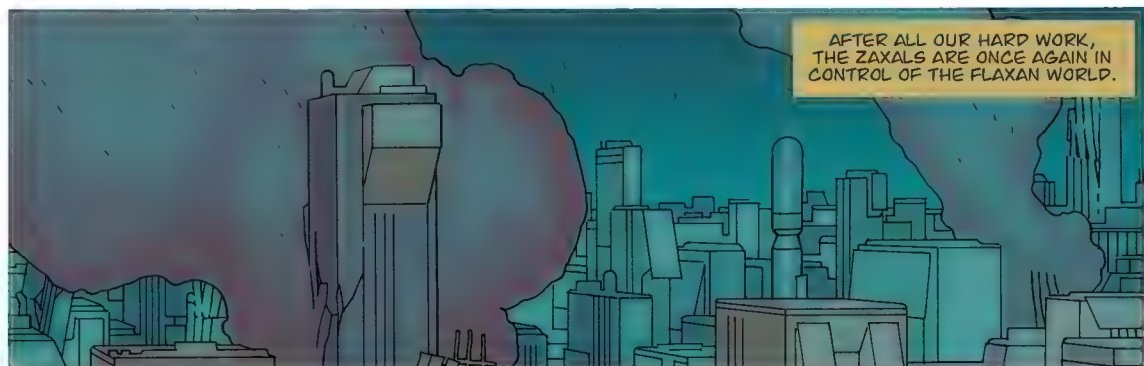
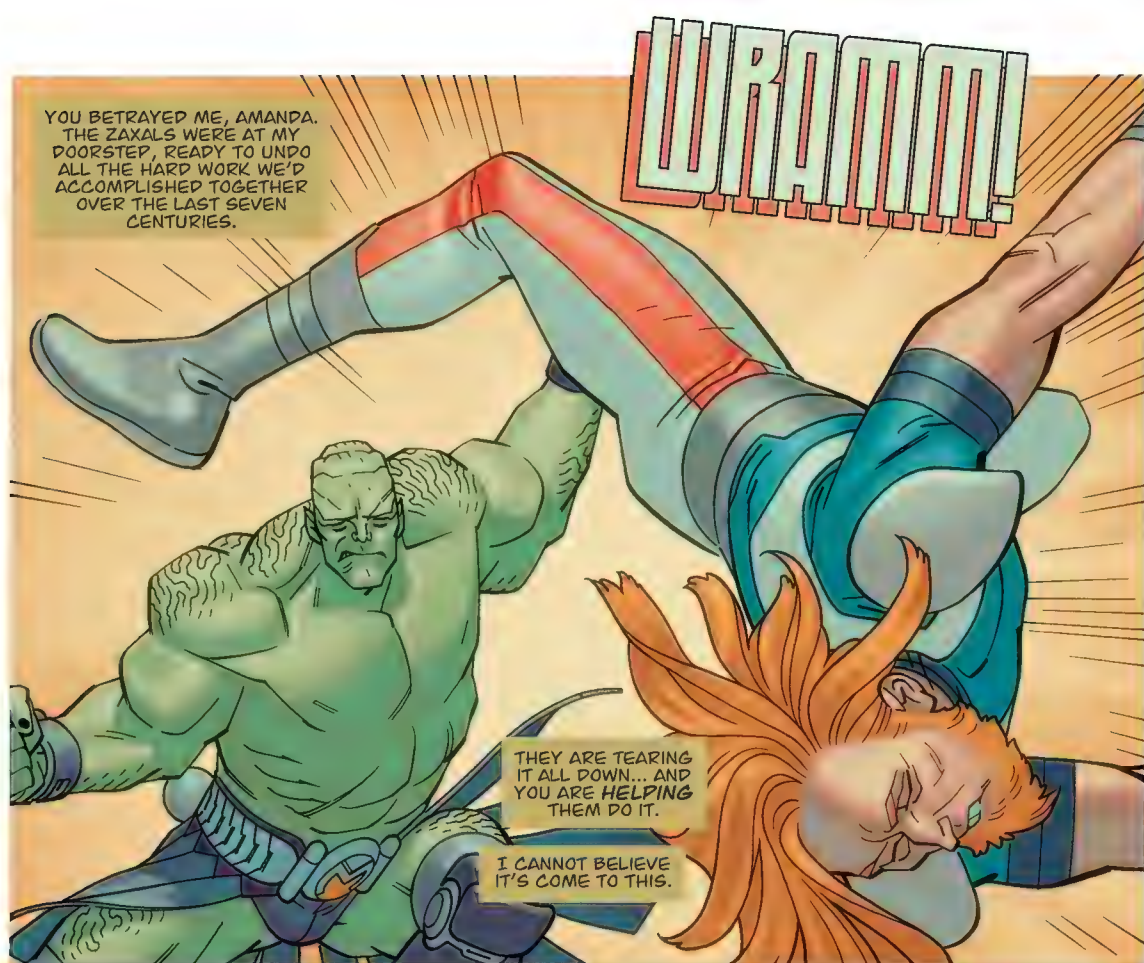
REX, I-- I FEEL LIKE I HARDLY **KNOW** YOU ANYMORE...

I KNEW WE HAD OUR ISSUES, BUT I NEVER REALIZED HOW MUCH WE HAD **DRIFTED** APART.

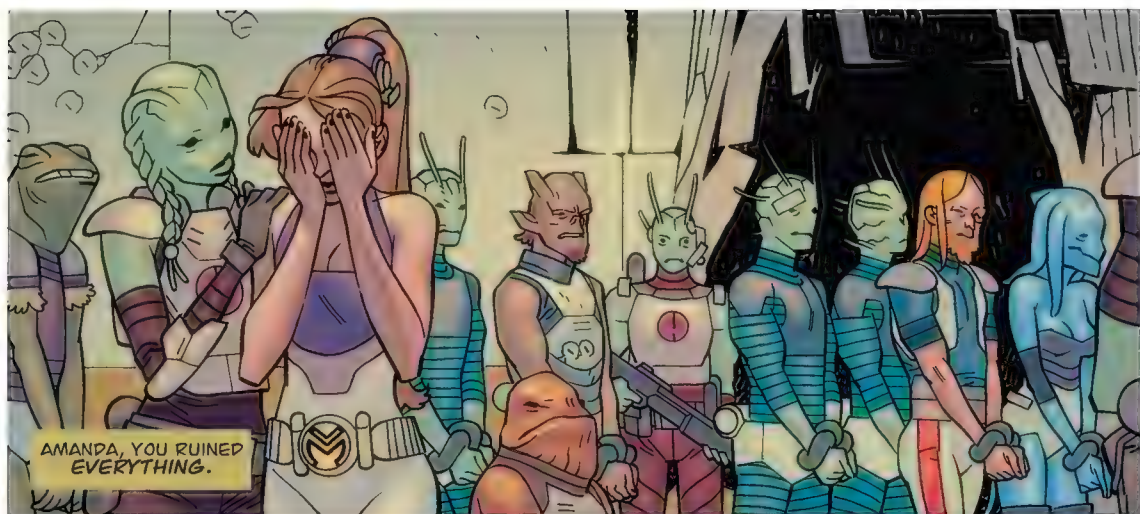




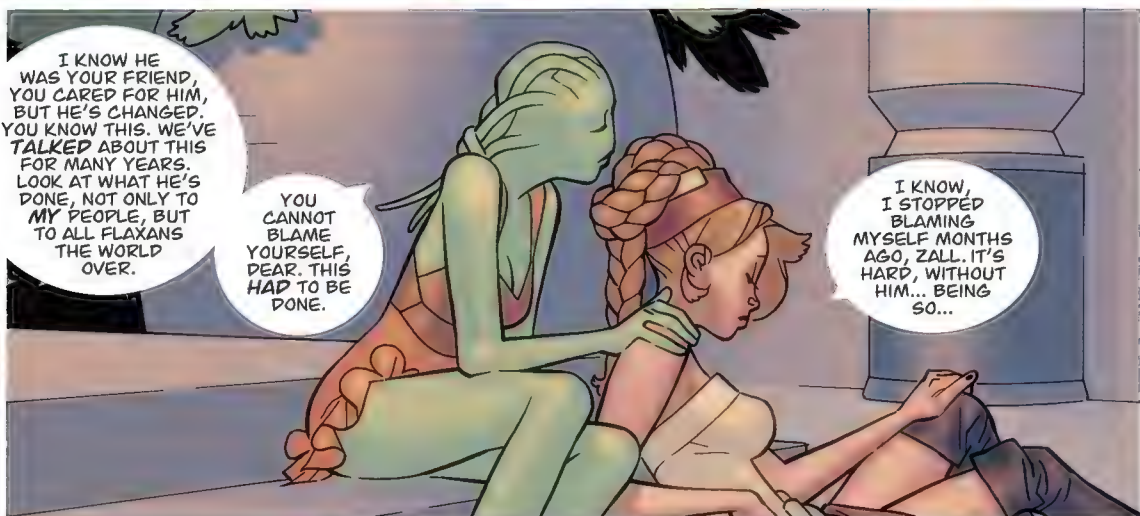








AMANDA, YOU RUINED EVERYTHING.



I KNOW HE WAS YOUR FRIEND, YOU CARED FOR HIM, BUT HE'S CHANGED. YOU KNOW THIS. WE'VE TALKED ABOUT THIS FOR MANY YEARS. LOOK AT WHAT HE'S DONE, NOT ONLY TO MY PEOPLE, BUT TO ALL FLAXANS THE WORLD OVER.

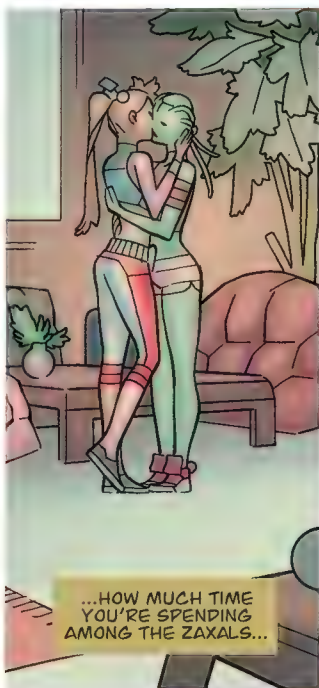
YOU CANNOT BLAME YOURSELF, DEAR. THIS HAD TO BE DONE.

I KNOW, I STOPPED BLAMING MYSELF MONTHS AGO, ZALL. IT'S HARD, WITHOUT HIM... BEING SO...



...ALONE.

SOMETIMES I THINK ABOUT HOW MUCH TIME HAS PASSED SINCE I WAS USURPED...

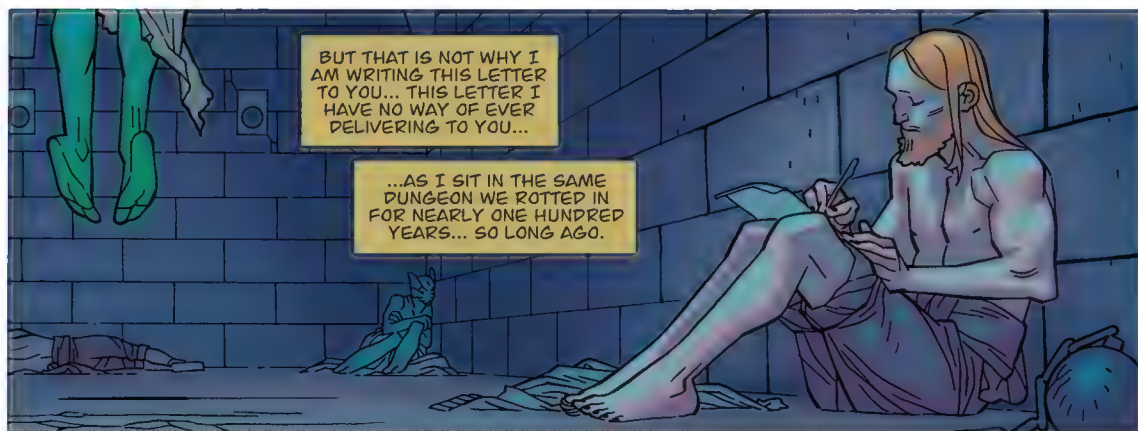


...HOW MUCH TIME YOU'RE SPENDING AMONG THE ZAXALS...



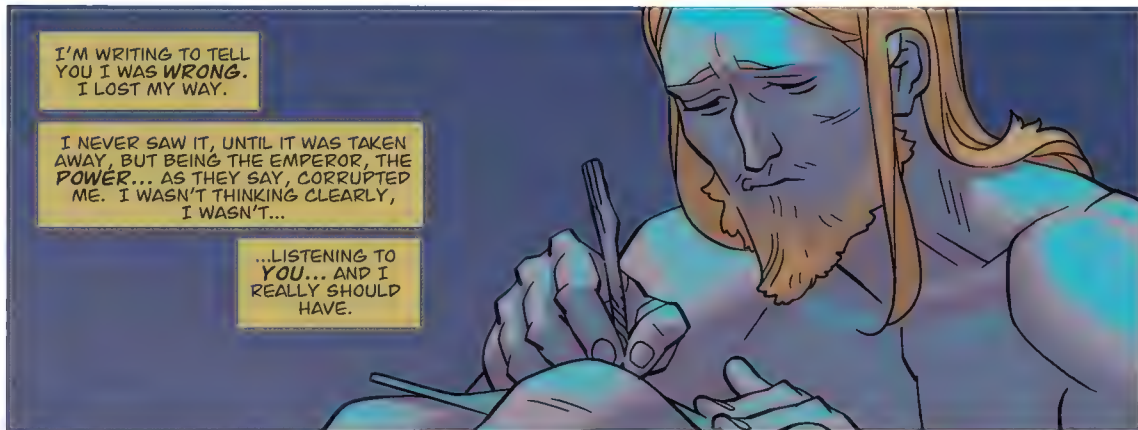
HOW CLOSE YOU MUST BE GROWING TO THEM.





BUT THAT IS NOT WHY I AM WRITING THIS LETTER TO YOU... THIS LETTER I HAVE NO WAY OF EVER DELIVERING TO YOU...

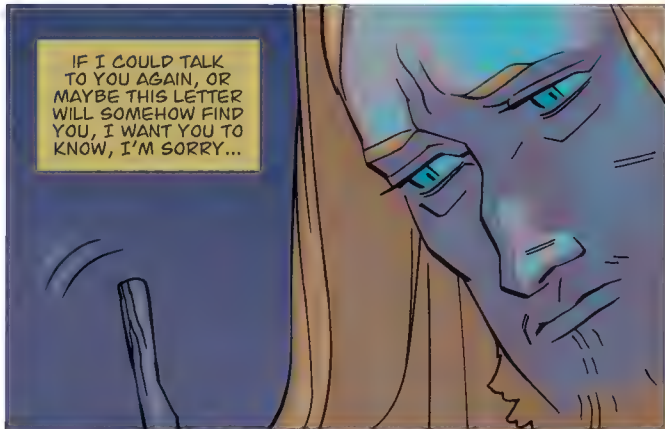
...AS I SIT IN THE SAME DUNGEON WE ROTTED IN FOR NEARLY ONE HUNDRED YEARS... SO LONG AGO.



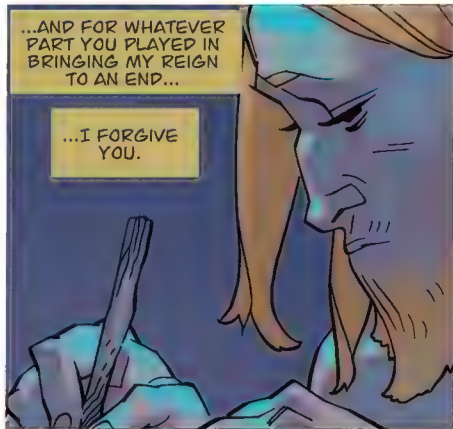
I'M WRITING TO TELL YOU I WAS **WRONG**. I LOST MY WAY.

I NEVER SAW IT, UNTIL IT WAS TAKEN AWAY, BUT BEING THE EMPEROR, THE **POWER**... AS THEY SAY, CORRUPTED ME. I WASN'T THINKING CLEARLY, I WASN'T...

...LISTENING TO **YOU**... AND I REALLY SHOULD HAVE.

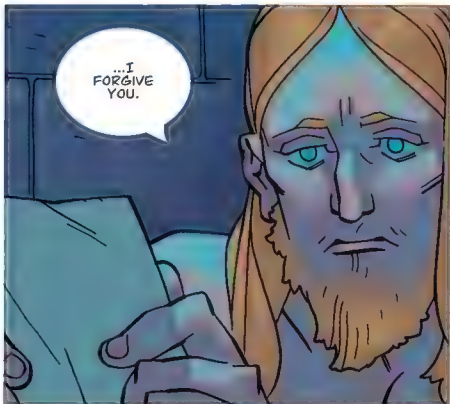


IF I COULD TALK TO YOU AGAIN, OR MAYBE THIS LETTER WILL SOMEHOW FIND YOU, I WANT YOU TO KNOW, I'M SORRY...

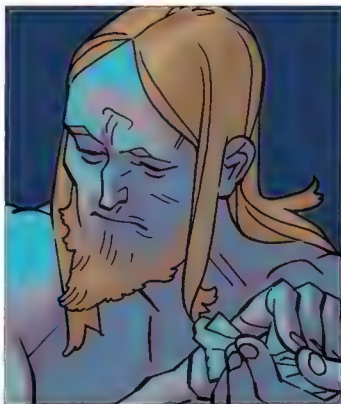


...AND FOR WHATEVER PART YOU PLAYED IN BRINGING MY REIGN TO AN END...

...I FORGIVE YOU.



...I FORGIVE YOU.







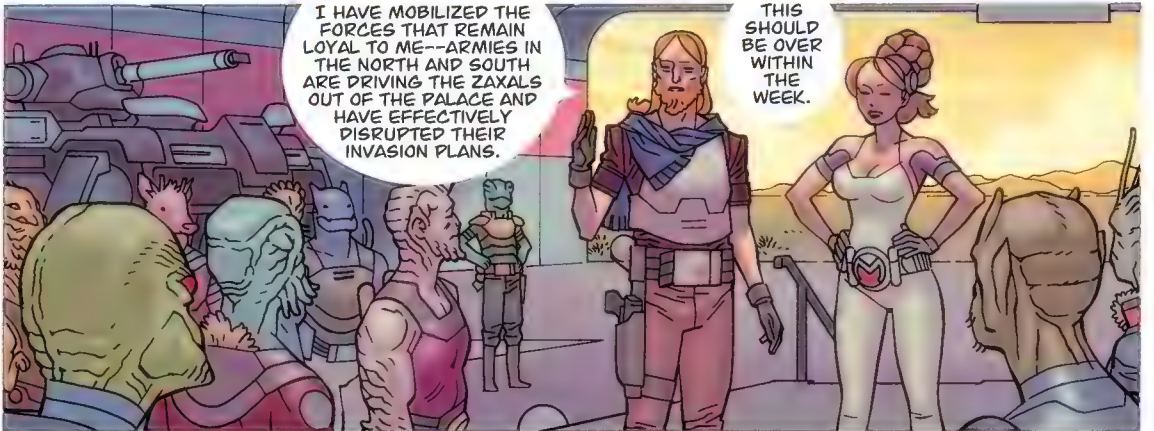
REX, YOU HAVE  
TO HELP ME--YOU  
WERE RIGHT ABOUT  
THE ZAXALS! THEY'RE  
MOUNTING AN ATTACK  
ON ANOTHER  
DIMENSION  
RIGHT NOW!

WE HAVE  
TO **STOP**  
THEM!

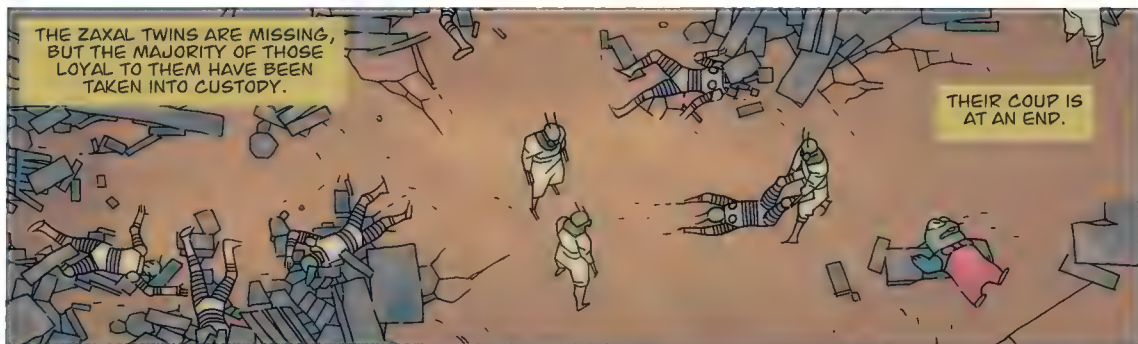


I HAVE MOBILIZED THE  
FORCES THAT REMAIN  
LOYAL TO ME--ARMIES IN  
THE NORTH AND SOUTH  
ARE DRIVING THE ZAXALS  
OUT OF THE PALACE AND  
HAVE EFFECTIVELY  
DISRUPTED THEIR  
INVASION PLANS.

THIS  
SHOULD  
BE OVER  
WITHIN  
THE WEEK.







THE ZAXAL TWINS ARE MISSING,  
BUT THE MAJORITY OF THOSE  
LOYAL TO THEM HAVE BEEN  
TAKEN INTO CUSTODY.

THEIR COUP IS  
AT AN END.

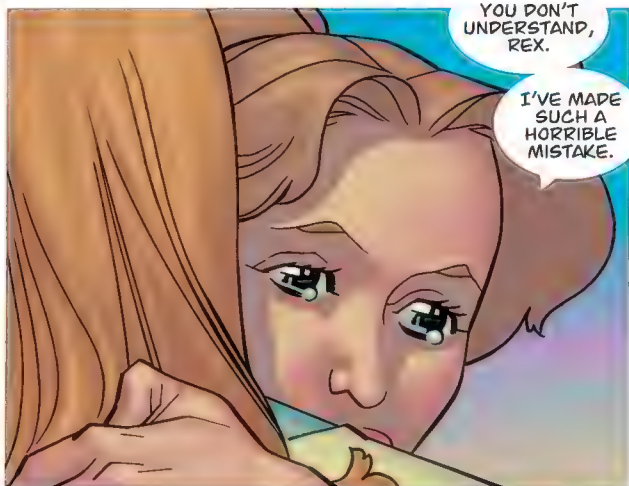


OH, REX...  
I'M SORRY  
FOR WHAT  
I--

PLEASE,  
SAY NO MORE.  
YOU WERE RIGHT  
ABOUT SO MANY THINGS.  
I HAD TURNED MY  
BACK ON THE PEOPLE...  
I WAS SEEKING MORE  
POWER AND NOT  
USING IT  
WISELY.

YOU WERE  
RIGHT TO  
OPPOSE ME,  
AMANDA.  
I SEE THAT  
NOW.

I WANT YOU  
TO KNOW...  
EVERYTHING WILL  
BE DIFFERENT  
NOW... BETTER,  
YOU'LL SEE.

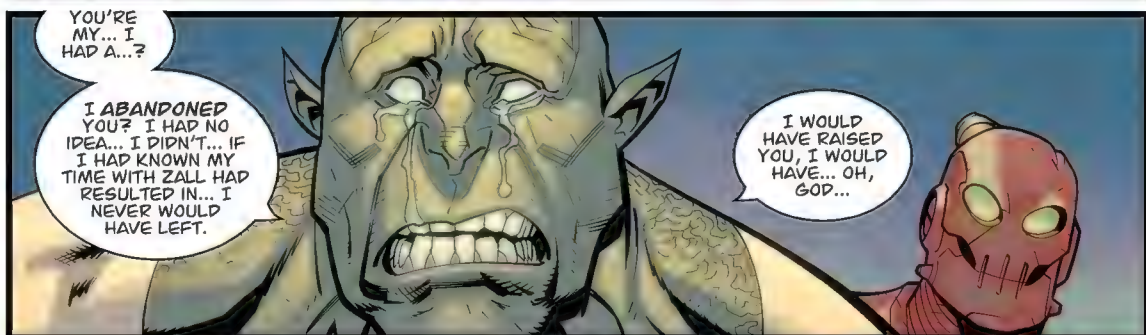


YOU DON'T  
UNDERSTAND,  
REX.

I'VE MADE  
SUCH A  
HORRIBLE  
MISTAKE.









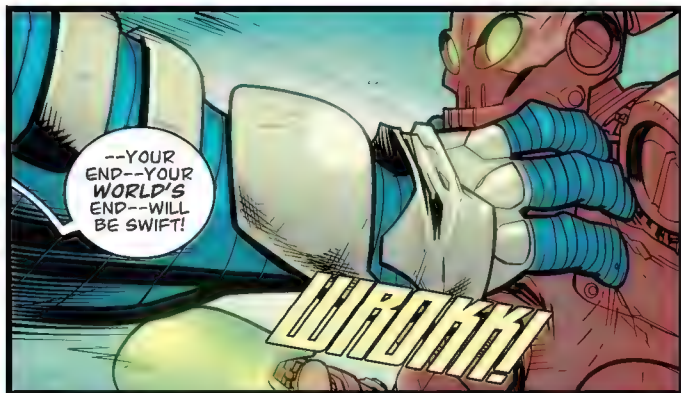


HOW--  
HOW  
COULD  
I--?

NO TIME  
FOR THAT NOW,  
AMANDA. WE'LL  
SORT THIS OUT  
LATER--FOR NOW,  
HE JUST NEEDS  
TO BE STOPPED.



DO NOT  
UNDERESTIMATE  
ME! I COMMAND  
THE FLAXAN  
LEGIONS--



--YOUR  
END--YOUR  
WORLD'S  
END--WILL  
BE SWIFT!



SOON I  
WILL HAVE THE  
OPPORTUNITY TO  
DO WHAT YOU  
DID--REBUILD  
YOUR WORLD IN  
MY IMAGE.

AND I'LL  
KEEP YOU  
BOTH ALIVE  
LONG ENOUGH  
TO WITNESS  
THIS AND  
DESPAIR.



OR  
NOT!





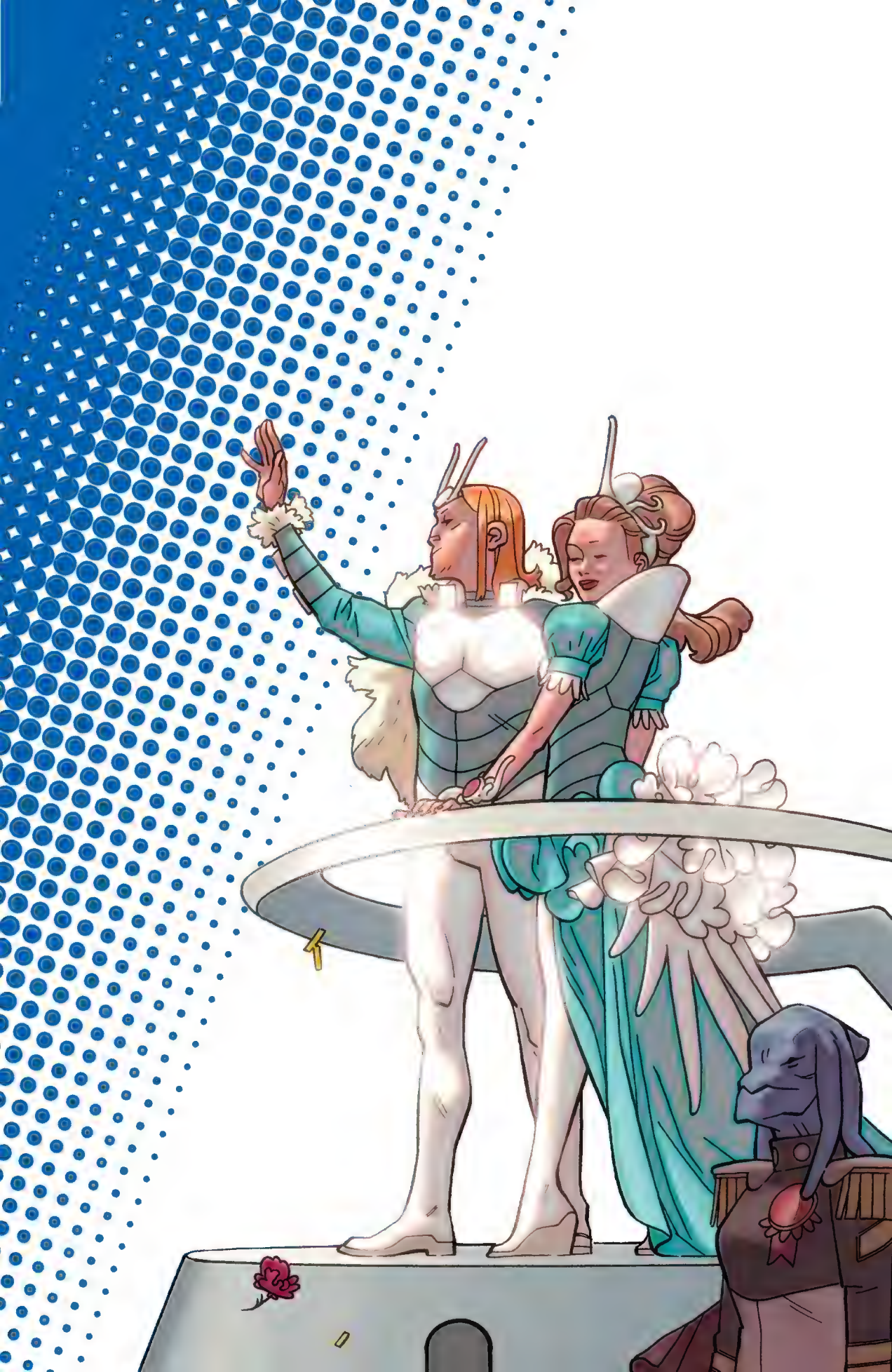
ON YOUR  
FEET,  
SOLDIER.

THE GUARDIANS  
OF THE GLOBE ARE  
BACK IN FULL FORCE,  
AND WE'RE AT YOUR  
COMMAND. YOU KNOW  
THESE BASTARDS  
BETTER THAN ANY  
OF US...

...AND I'M  
WILLING TO BET,  
GIVEN THE RIGHT  
RESOURCES,  
YOU KNOW  
EXACTLY  
HOW TO BEAT  
THEM...

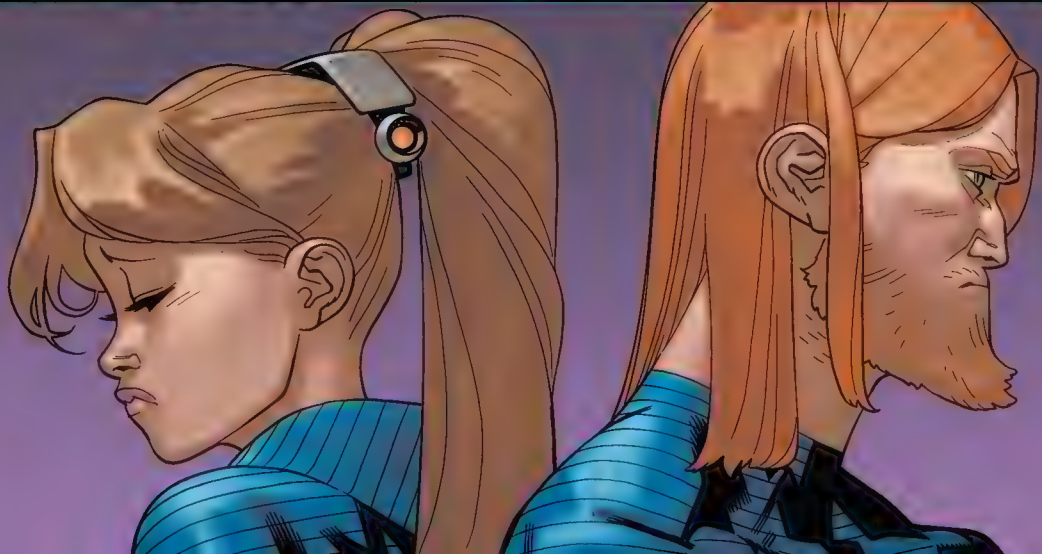
LET'S  
FINISH  
THIS!



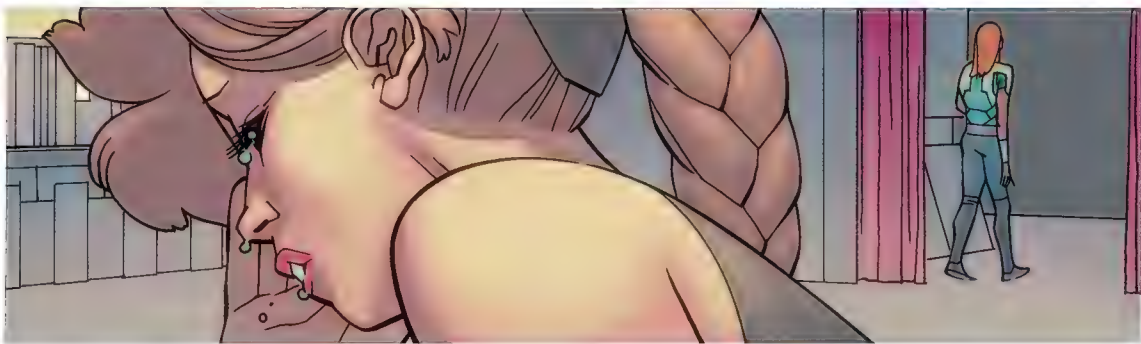
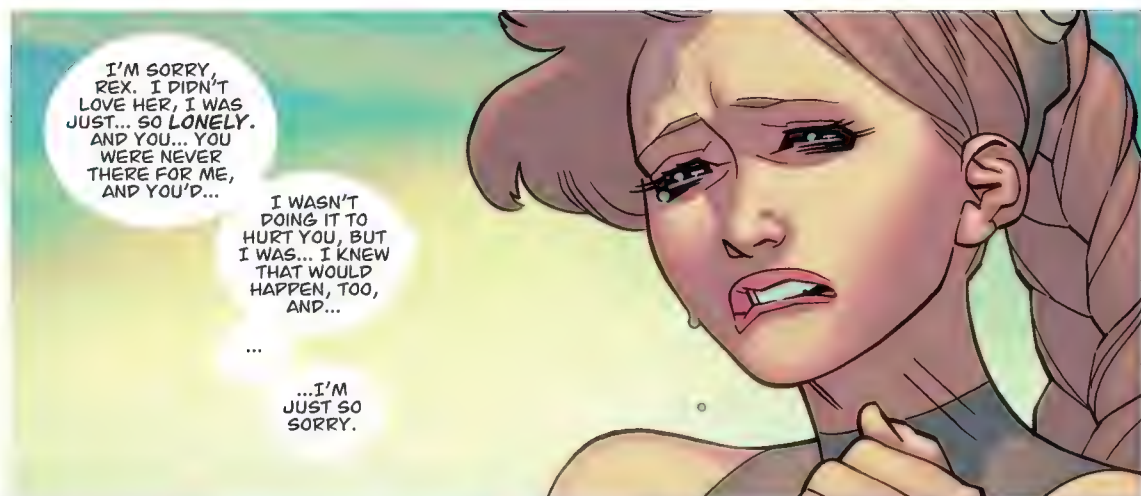




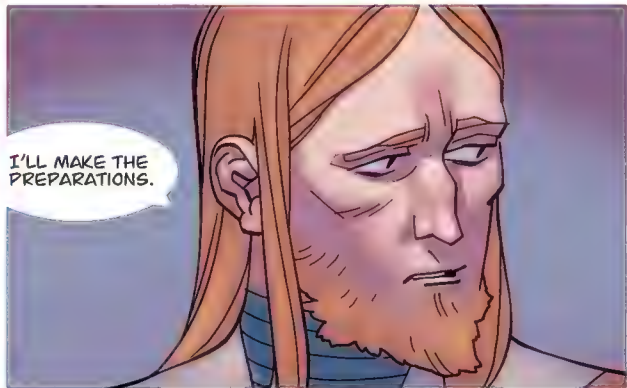
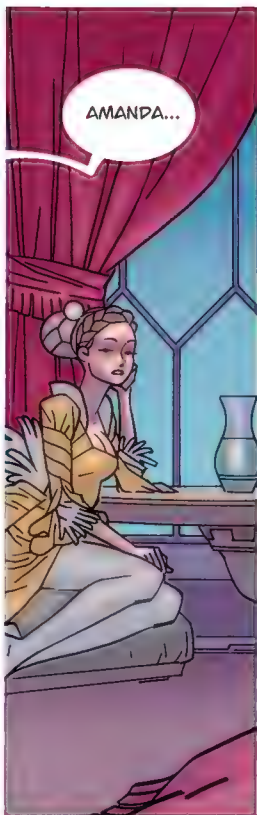
# CHAPTER 96



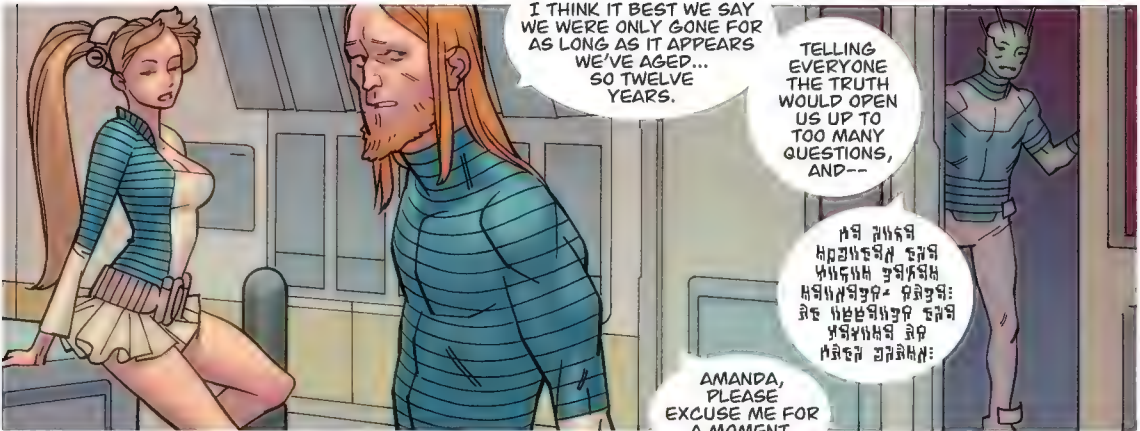










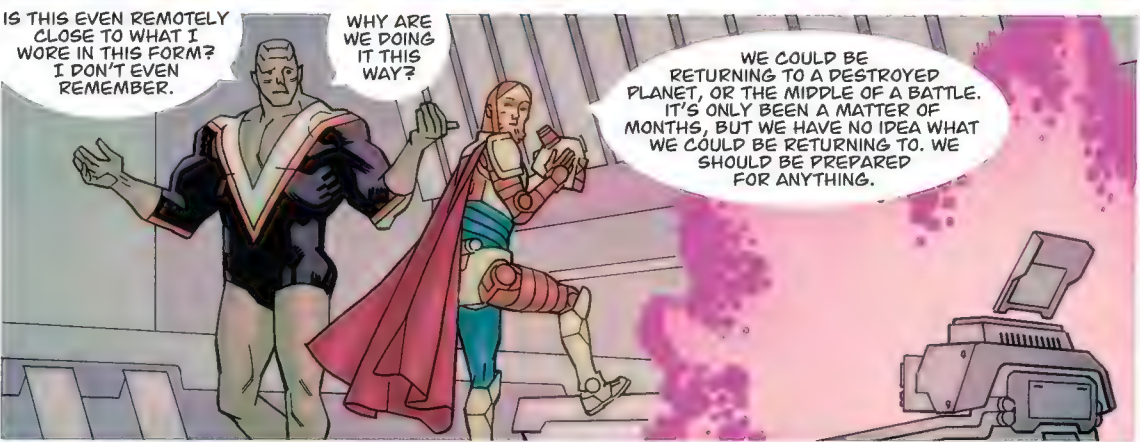


I THINK IT BEST WE SAY WE WERE ONLY GONE FOR AS LONG AS IT APPEARS WE'VE AGED... SO TWELVE YEARS.

TELLING EVERYONE THE TRUTH WOULD OPEN US UP TO TOO MANY QUESTIONS, AND--

အမှန်တရားကို  
အားလုံးသိရန် နေရာ  
အားလုံးသိရန် အားလုံးသိရန်  
အားလုံးသိရန် အားလုံးသိရန်  
အားလုံးသိရန် အားလုံးသိရန်  
အားလုံးသိရန် အားလုံးသိရန်

AMANDA, PLEASE EXCUSE ME FOR A MOMENT.



IS THIS EVEN REMOTELY CLOSE TO WHAT I WORE IN THIS FORM? I DON'T EVEN REMEMBER.

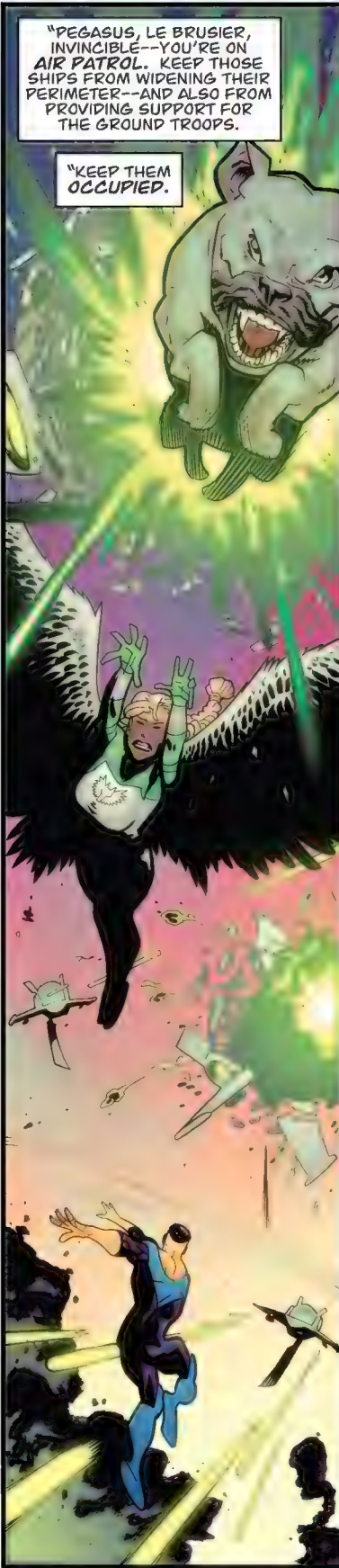
WHY ARE WE DOING IT THIS WAY?

WE COULD BE RETURNING TO A DESTROYED PLANET, OR THE MIDDLE OF A BATTLE. IT'S ONLY BEEN A MATTER OF MONTHS, BUT WE HAVE NO IDEA WHAT WE COULD BE RETURNING TO. WE SHOULD BE PREPARED FOR ANYTHING.



WHAT HAVE WE MISSED?

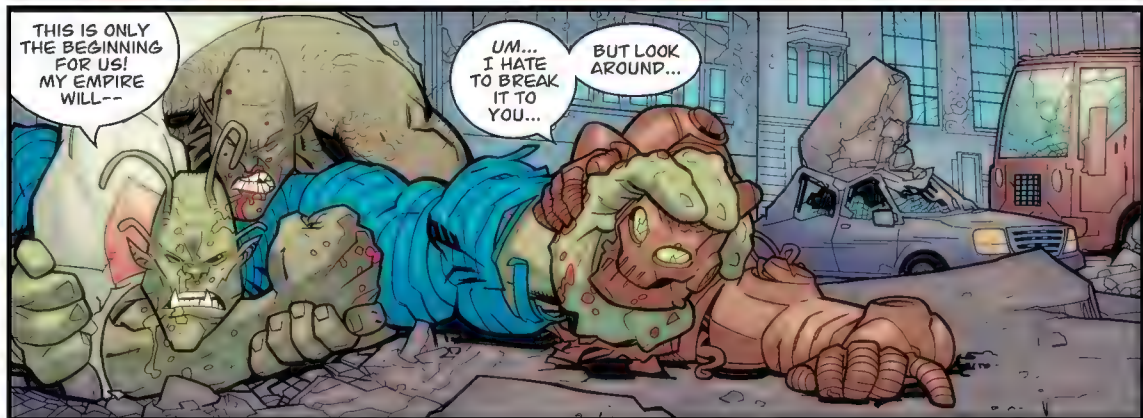




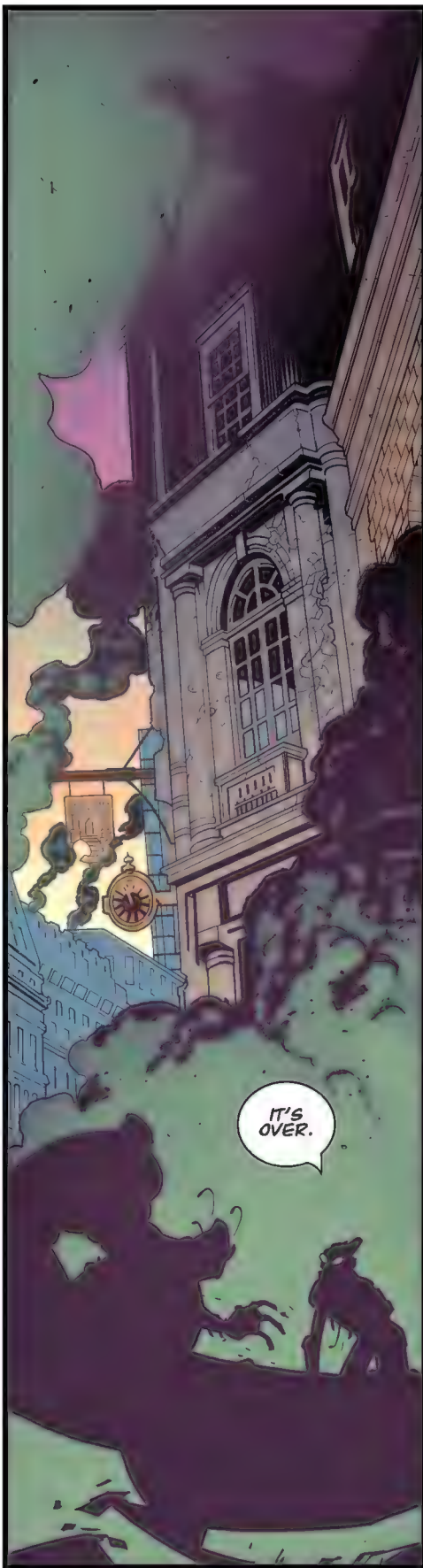












IT'S OVER.



THAT'S IT! YOU'VE CAUSED ENOUGH DAMAGE. I HOPE YOU'RE PROUD OF YOURSELF. WHAT A GREAT LEADER YOU TURNED OUT TO BE.

YOU'RE AN EMBARRASSMENT.



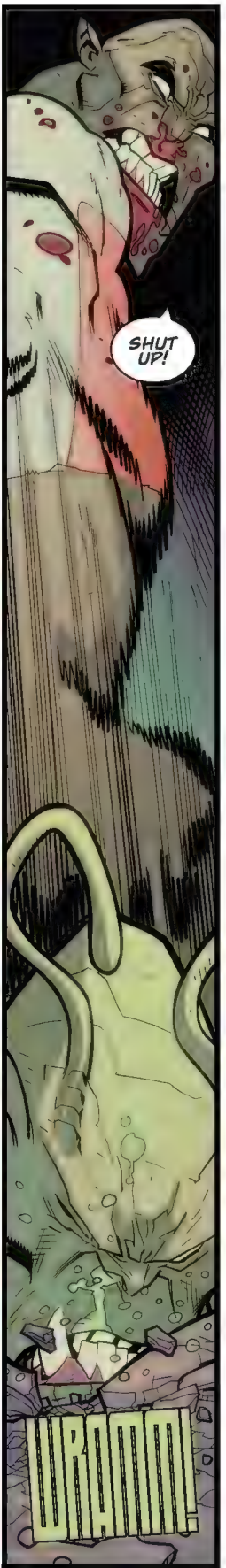
NO! IT'S NOT OVER-- IT CAN'T BE! NOT NOW! NOT LIKE THIS!

YOU DON'T GET TO WIN! NOT YOU-- NOT AFTER EVERYTHING YOU'VE DONE!

I WON'T LET YOU WIN--



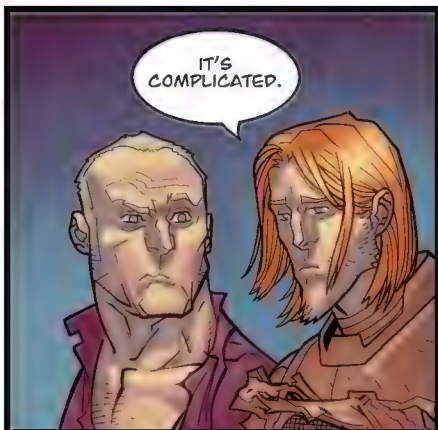
--YOU MONSTER!



SHUT UP!

WRATH!!







ZANDALE RANDOLPH'S  
SWANK STUDIO APARTMENT.



OH, BOY--  
THAT WAS A  
TOUGH ONE.  
FRACTURE  
ISN'T TOO  
BAD,  
SO DON'T  
WORRY.

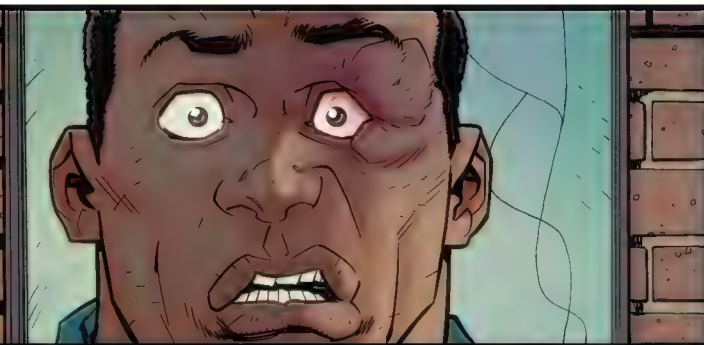
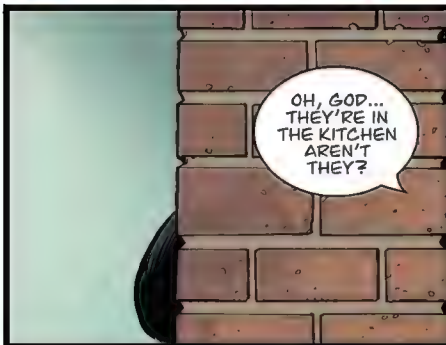


SHOULD BE HEALED IN A  
WEEK OR SO, AND IT GIVES  
US A GOOD REASON TO  
AVOID MY PARENTS! IT'D  
BE A PRETTY TOUGH SELL  
THAT I BROKE MY ARM  
WHILE SETTING UP  
FOR A GALLERY  
SHOW--

ZANDALE, HONEY--  
YOU'RE RAMBLING  
NONSENSE--HON,  
PLEASE--WHAT  
ARE YOU TALKING  
ABOUT?!



OH, GOD...  
THEY'RE IN  
THE KITCHEN  
AREN'T  
THEY?



I DON'T  
UNDERSTAND.  
YOUR BROTHER  
WAS FIGHTING  
THOSE ALIENS...  
NOT YOU. HOW  
COULD YOU  
BREAK  
YOUR--



OH,  
BOY...















SO,  
WHAT'S UP,  
OLIVER?

I--IT'S  
JUST--



YOU COULD  
HAVE DIED--  
YOU ALMOST  
DID.

AND IT WOULD  
HAVE BEEN MY  
FAULT. I WOULD  
HAVE KILLED  
YOU!

I NEVER  
SHOULD HAVE  
BROUGHT THE  
SCOURGE VIRUS  
HERE... I WAS ONLY  
THINKING ABOUT THE  
GREATER GOOD.  
I NEVER  
THOUGHT--

I'M SO  
SORRY...



IF LOSING SOMEONE  
CLOSE TO YOU FEELS  
LIKE THIS... IF THAT'S  
WHAT IT'S LIKE TO  
HAVE A LOVED  
ONE DIE...

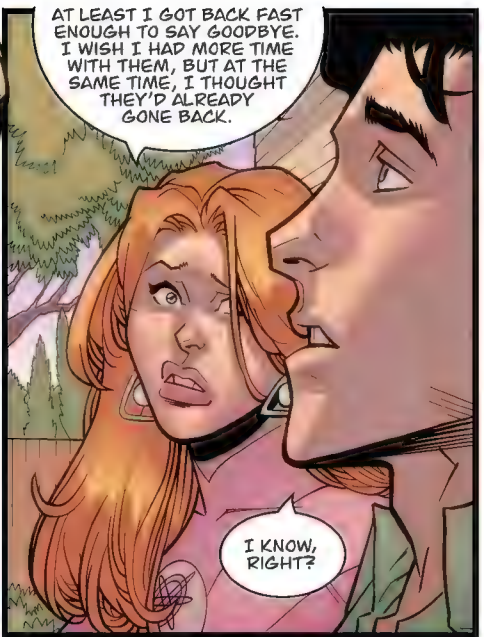
MAYBE I  
WAS WRONG  
ABOUT THE  
WHOLE  
THING...



IT'S OKAY,  
MAN.  
I'M... I'M  
FINE.

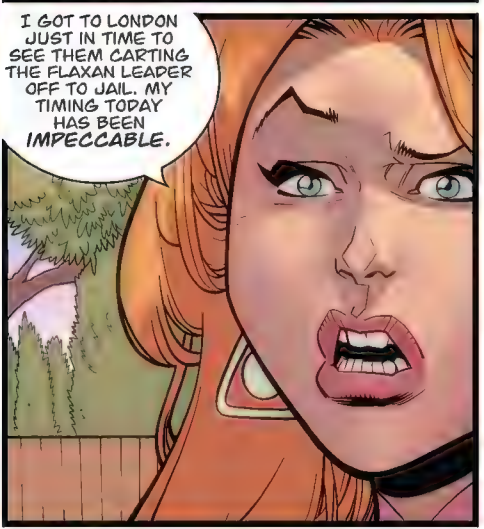
WE'RE  
GOOD,  
OKAY?



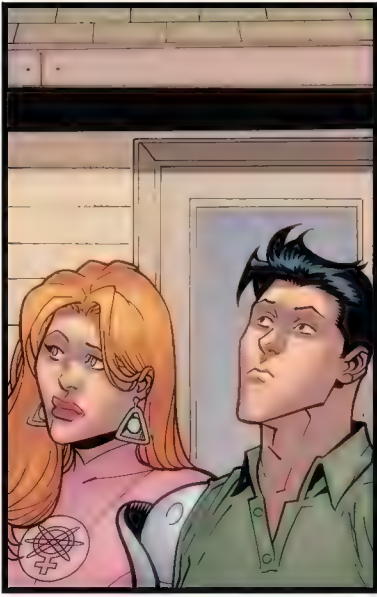


AT LEAST I GOT BACK FAST ENOUGH TO SAY GOODBYE. I WISH I HAD MORE TIME WITH THEM, BUT AT THE SAME TIME, I THOUGHT THEY'D ALREADY GONE BACK.

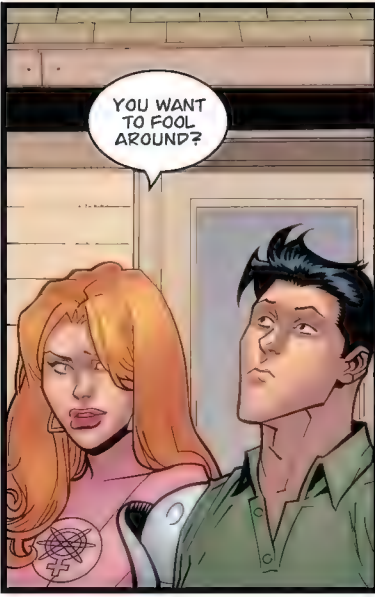
I KNOW, RIGHT?



I GOT TO LONDON JUST IN TIME TO SEE THEM CARTING THE FLAXAN LEADER OFF TO JAIL. MY TIMING TODAY HAS BEEN IMPECCABLE.

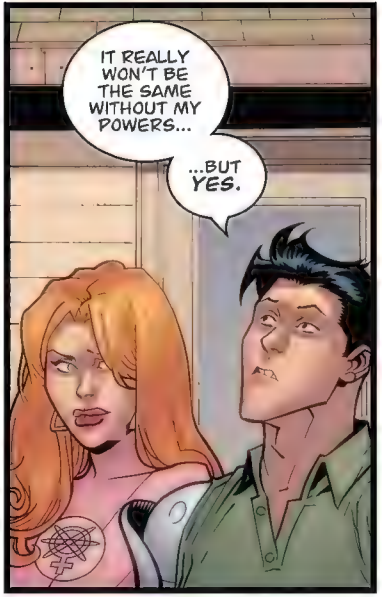


YOU WANT TO FOOL AROUND?

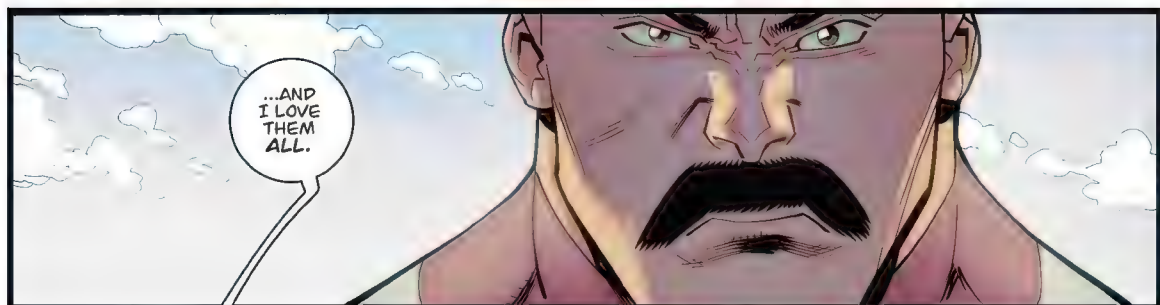
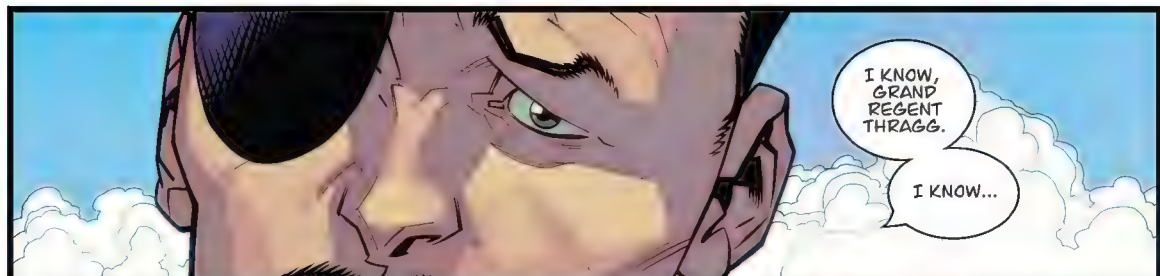


IT REALLY WON'T BE THE SAME WITHOUT MY POWERS...

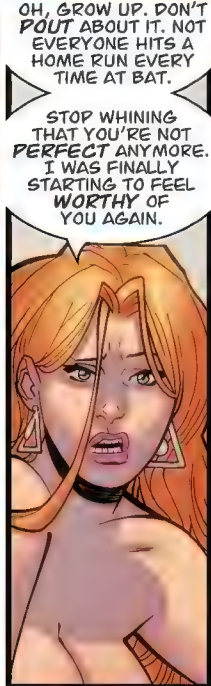
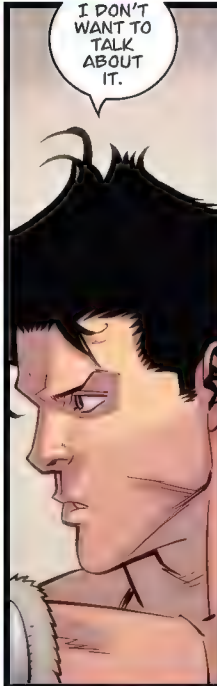
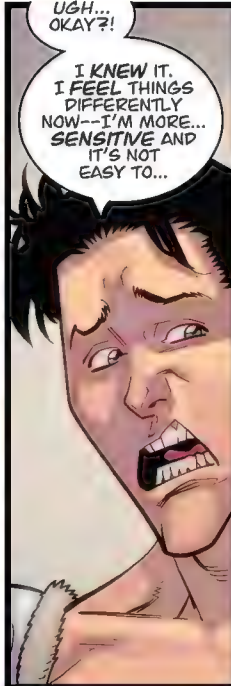
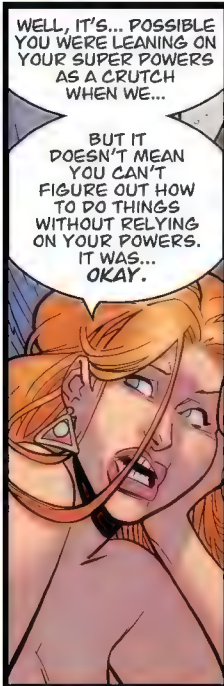
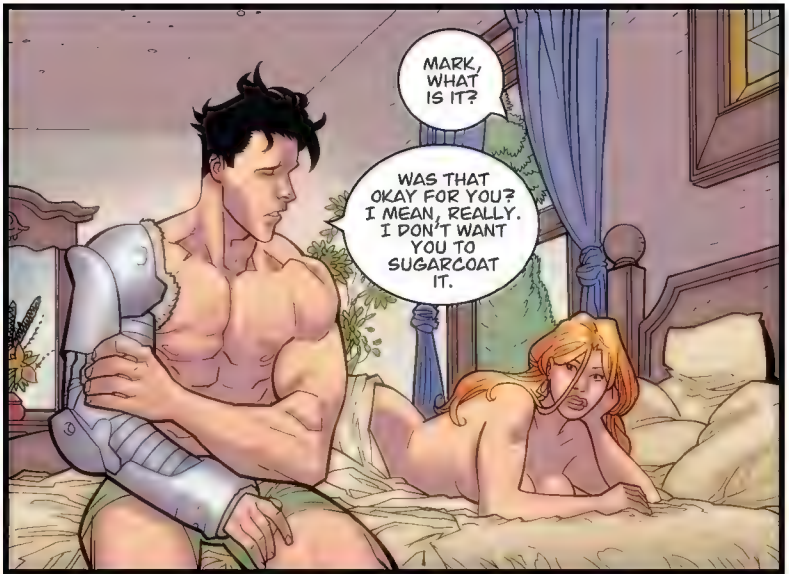
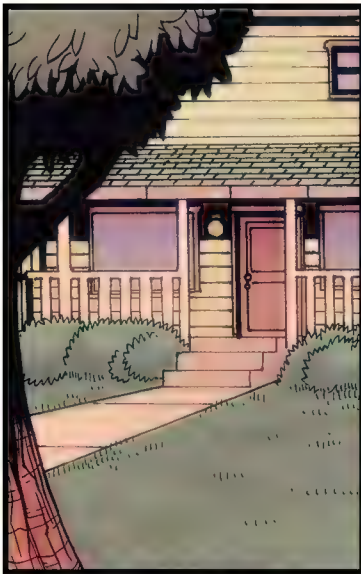
...BUT YES.



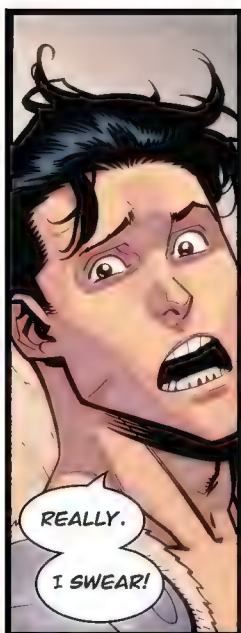
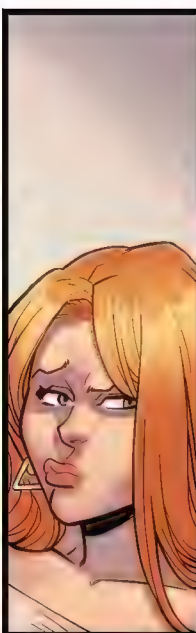
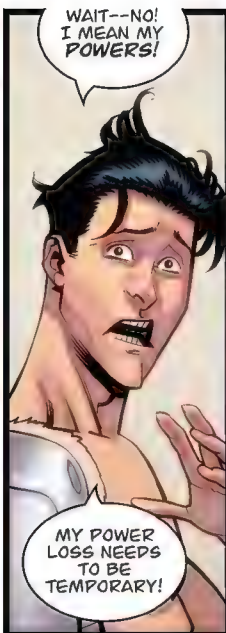
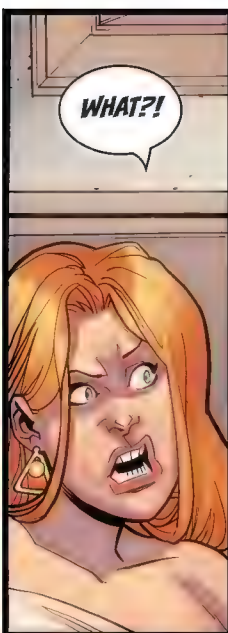
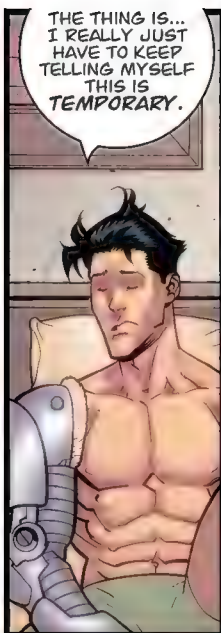














"I'VE GOT NO IDEA  
WHAT HE COULD  
BE WORKING ON."





DEEP BELOW THE PENTAGON,  
THE SECRET HEADQUARTERS OF  
THE GLOBAL DEFENSE AGENCY.

UNITED STATES  
PENTAGON

Parking in Rear



I KNEW YOUR  
MOTHER ONLY  
BRIEFLY. I CARED  
FOR HER, BUT WE  
WERE NOT...  
MEANT TO BE  
TOGETHER.

I NEVER  
KNEW YOU--  
THAT WE'D--I  
DIDN'T EVEN THINK  
IT COULD BE  
POSSIBLE FOR  
MY MONSTER  
FORM TO...

IF I'D  
KNOWN YOU  
EXISTED, I  
WOULD NEVER  
HAVE LEFT...  
I WOULD  
HAVE...

I HAVE  
NOTHING  
TO SAY  
TO YOU.

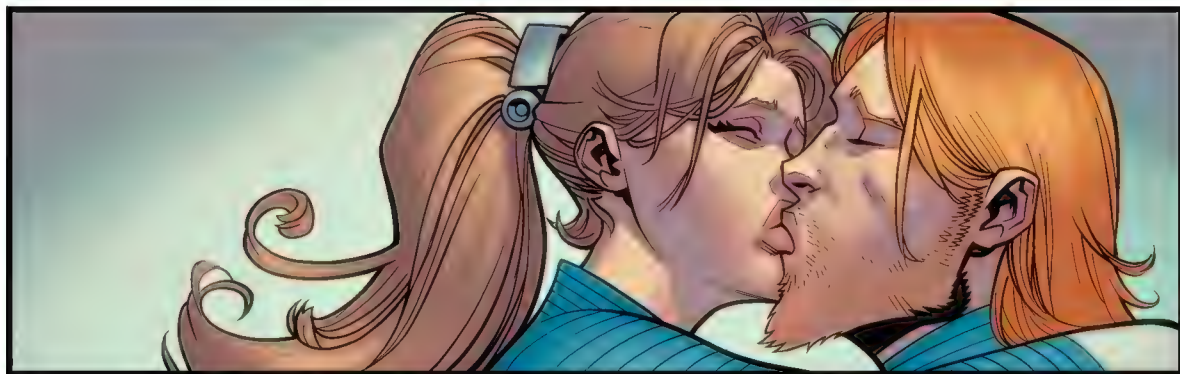
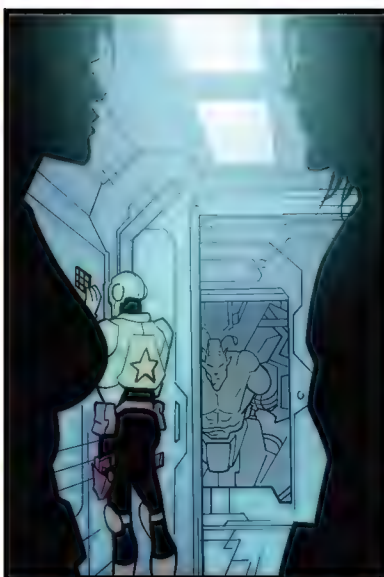
LEAVE  
ME.

WE  
SHOULD  
GO.

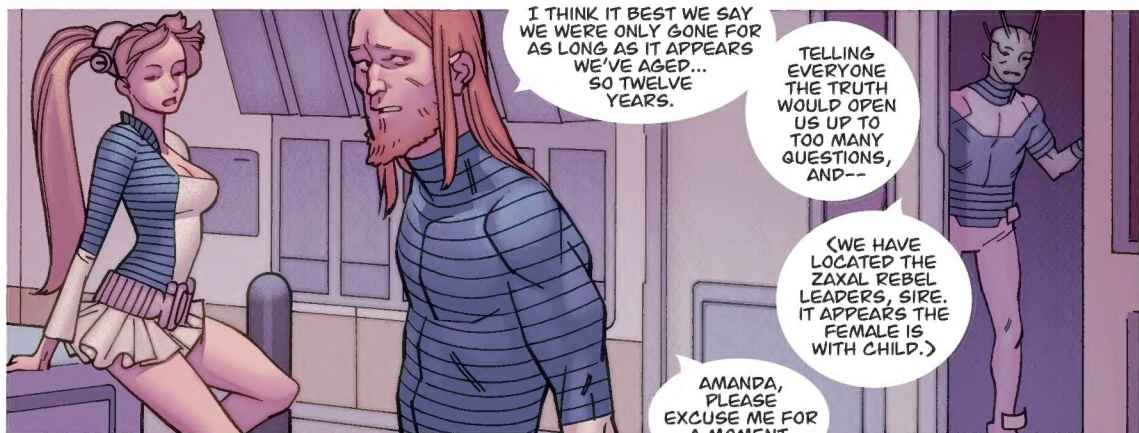
THANKS  
FOR DOING  
THIS,  
REX.

I DON'T  
THINK I COULD  
HAVE GOTTEN  
THROUGH  
THIS ALONE.







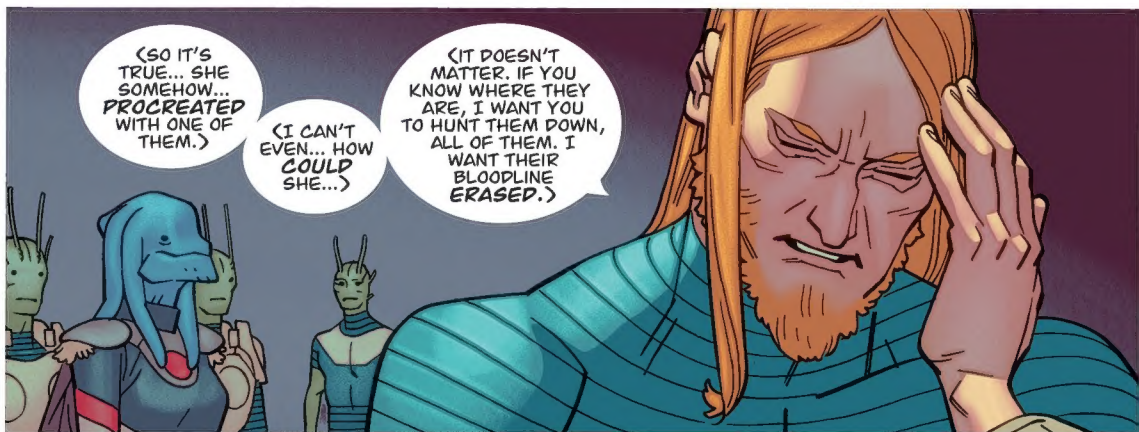


I THINK IT BEST WE SAY  
WE WERE ONLY GONE FOR  
AS LONG AS IT APPEARS  
WE'VE AGED...  
SO TWELVE  
YEARS.

TELLING  
EVERYONE  
THE TRUTH  
WOULD OPEN  
US UP TO  
TOO MANY  
QUESTIONS,  
AND--

(WE HAVE  
LOCATED THE  
ZAXAL REBEL  
LEADERS, SIRE.  
IT APPEARS THE  
FEMALE IS  
WITH CHILD.)

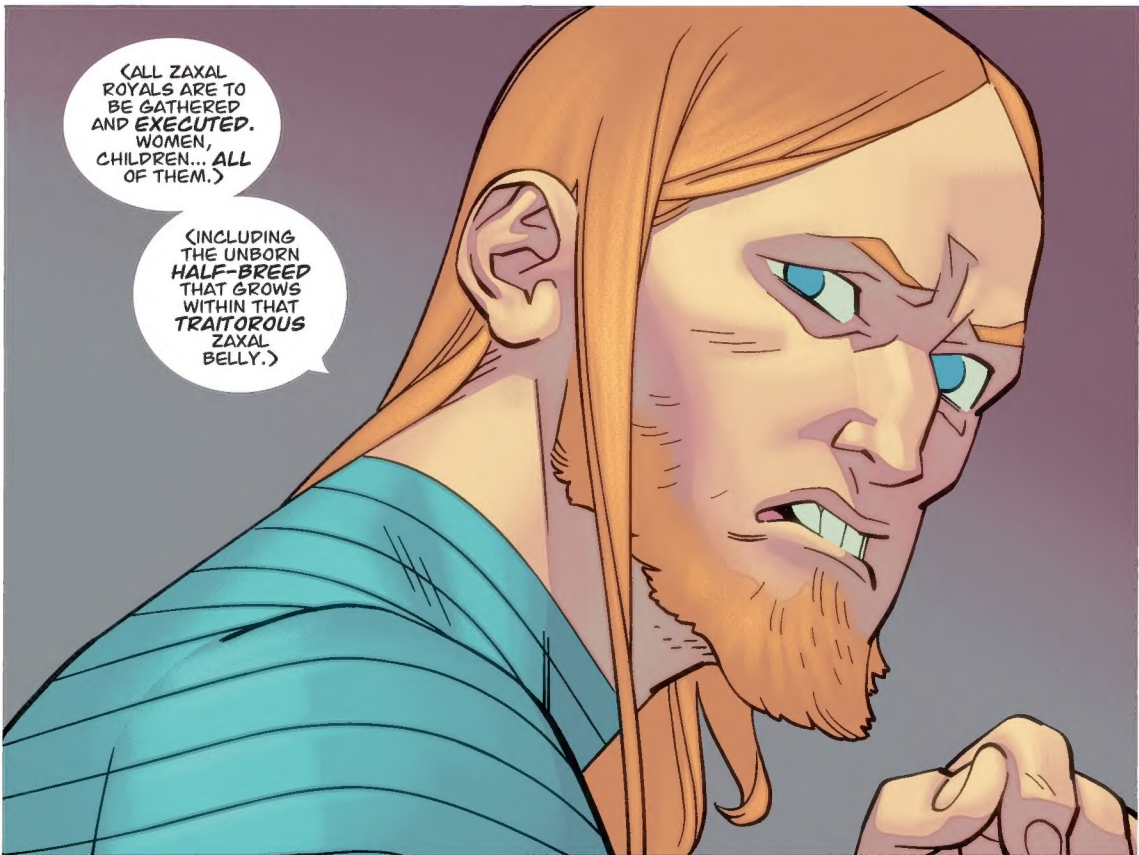
AMANDA,  
PLEASE  
EXCUSE ME FOR  
A MOMENT.



(SO IT'S  
TRUE... SHE  
SOMEHOW...  
**PROCREATED**  
WITH ONE OF  
THEM.)

(I CAN'T  
EVEN... HOW  
**COULD**  
SHE...)

(IT DOESN'T  
MATTER. IF YOU  
KNOW WHERE THEY  
ARE, I WANT YOU  
TO HUNT THEM DOWN,  
ALL OF THEM. I  
WANT THEIR  
BLOODLINE  
**ERASED.**)



(ALL ZAXAL  
ROYALS ARE TO  
BE GATHERED  
AND **EXECUTED.**  
WOMEN,  
CHILDREN... **ALL**  
OF THEM.)

(INCLUDING  
THE UNBORN  
**HALF-BREED**  
THAT GROWS  
WITHIN THAT  
**TRAITOROUS**  
ZAXAL  
BELLY.)











# COLLECTS ISSUES 48-96 OF THE EISNER NOMINATED SERIES

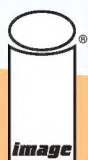
PLUS INVINCIBLE RETURNS 1 & ASTOUNDING WOLF-MAN 11



## THE BEST SUPERHERO COMIC BOOK IN THE UNIVERSE!

Ever since Mark Grayson got superpowers, life has never been the same. As Invincible, he's fought the universe's most dangerous villains, graduated high school, got a girlfriend (two of them!)... and his father, the world's greatest superhero Omni-Man, revealed himself to be an alien conqueror bent on taking over Earth. Since then, Invincible's been working for the Global Defense Agency, fighting their fights and saving the world in their name. Until now.

Invincible can no longer follow their orders unquestioned. Now he finds himself up against the very organization he's been working for! And war looms on the horizon...



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